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Vol. XXXI.

Detective Paul's Right Bower.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK.



TWO MINUTES OF DEAD SILENCE AND THEN THE DARK HAIR OF THE GALLANT BOY APPEARED
UPON THE CREST OF A WAVE.

Detective Paul's Right Bower;

OR,

'LONGSHORE LIJE.

A Story of Adventure on Land and Lake.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "THE FLYAWAY AFLOAT," "RED RIVER ROVERS," "YOUNG MUSTANGER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A BOYISH QUARREL—AN ACCIDENTAL SHOT—REWARDING AN ENEMY.

A BOY, with a handsome sunburned face was lounging in a small sail-boat off a point which ran out into one of the great northern chain of lakes—Ontario. He was lying idly, his body stretched out in the stern-sheets, and apparently only thinking how he could most easily pass the hours away. A dog lay at his feet, and his gun, which he had been using through the afternoon, was on a thwart in front of him.

"Lazy is no name for it," muttered the young fellow, yawning. "Oh, if I only had an aim in life; something to keep me busy."

How many bright boys, in this great world of ours, think the same thing every day. Something to keep body and brain busy. Give our young men that and they will be content.

Ned Norton was only eighteen and yet he was nearly weary of the world. He was gifted with a strong mind as well as body and wanted something to keep both busy. Just the sort of young man, who, if left to his own resources and obliged to work for a living, would have gone to work gallantly and have done good service, too. He was partly roused from his indolent languor by hearing a shrill voice cry:

"Hullo, Lazy Ned; what ar' ye doin' thar?"

Norton turned his head and saw a boy seated in a rough punt about a hundred fathoms distant, looking at him with a saucy air which was simply maddening. Ned half-started up and glared at him.

"Get out of this, Lije Taylor," he cried. "Ten to one you've been stealing my decoys."

"Ten cents to a Boston cracker you are a liar, Ned Norton," replied the boy. "You never heard of my stealin'; nobody never did."

"Well, clear out, anyhow. I won't have you around here—mind that."

"How ar' you going to help yourself, Lazy?" demanded the boy, impudently.

He was sitting coiled up in the stern of the punt, ready to dodge anything that might be hurled at him. At a glance it was plainly to be seen that he was a young Ishmaelite, his hand against every man and every man's hand against him. His face was so browned by constant exposure to the sun and wind that he looked almost like a mulatto, and yet, where his blue sailor shirt was torn on the sleeve, his skin showed white and fair as that of a lady. This was Lije Taylor, known as 'Longshore Lije, a boy who had spent all his life, from the time he could manage an oar, upon the lake,

picking up a precarious livelihood for himself and his grandmother, all who were left of a large family. Lije was now fourteen years old, very stoutly built for his age and perfectly fearless where danger was concerned. How he managed to live few knew or cared, but he not only did that, but when cold weather came on, managed to lay by a store of necessities to take him through the winter. Perhaps he had a hard life, but if he did no one knew it, for he was never known to complain. With his old nets and fishing tackle he got more fish than any man along the shore, but his independent ways made him far from a favorite, and many, like Ned Norton, without knowing any thing about the lad, took him to be utterly bad. The manner in which he had been treated made him peculiar in his intercourse with his fellow-man, hence his rude address.

Of course he ought to have known better. Ned Norton was the son of Squire Archibald Norton, who lived in the big white mansion in the main street of the village of Springport, who owned the mill and elevator, and in fact nearly the whole village. Lije ought to have bowed down to him as others did, but Lije was not one of the bowing kind, and addressed Master Ned very much as he would have addressed any other person whose ways did not suit him.

"You've got a heap of cheek, Lije," cried Norton, angrily. "If I come after you, I'll make you skin out of Galilee mighty sudden, I tell you."

"Will you now? If I had you down there in the bay, where you wouldn't drown, I'd duck you, as sure as my name is Lije Taylor. I don't take any lip from you."

"Who began it?" roared Ned, catching up his oars and getting ready to ship them. "I'm after you, now you've waked me up, and if I don't make it lively for you, I'm a ghost."

"By Jinks, I reckon I have waked him," muttered Lije, as he turned the head of his punt into the bay. "If he comes on my ground, I'll lick him or get licked myself, and I dunno which it will be."

He dug his oars into the water and began to pull into the bay, Ned following, his shell half leaping from the water at every stroke of the oars. The taunts of the young 'longshoreman had made him furiously angry, and he pulled as he had never pulled before. Lije was grinning even as he pulled, for there was a spice of wickedness in his composition, and he calculated on a tussle with Norton on the sandy beach of the bay, when he heard a loud report and a cry of pain.

Lije looked over his shoulder.

He saw at a glance that an accident had happened. Ned had dropped his oars and was bending over in the boat, clasping his ankle with both hands. All the fight was taken out of Lije in an instant, and backing water with one oar while he pulled lustily with the other, he brought the punt about and rowed back toward the shell.

"What's the racket?" he gasped, as he saw that Norton's face was pale and that the leg of his trowsers was bloody.

"I'm shot," answered Ned. "I don't know how badly, but I've got a charge of No. 6 shot in my leg. It's bad enough, I guess."

"That's what a feller always gets when he picks a row with another chap," declared Lije, as he brought his boat alongside. Lije was hardly consistent. He was ready and willing to help young Norton now that he was in trouble, but by no means ready to acknowledge that his conduct had anything to do with provoking the row. But he sprung at once into the shell, and tearing the cloth from Ned's leg, saw that it was badly mangled below the knee and was bleeding rapidly.

"That's got to be stopped, you know," he exclaimed. "Got a han'kercher? Ah, this yer will do."

Ned wore a sailor shirt, with a jaunty black-silk tie, and this tie Lije dragged off without remorse. With a deftness of hand which only a sailor knows, he knotted the silk, and using a stretcher from the shell, formed a tourniquet, which he twisted hard, and soon stopped the flow of blood.

"I see Dr. Furbeck do that when Nigger Jim cut his leg with a hatchet," he explained. "I'm no slouch ef I do hev fits, lemme tell you, Lazy—Ned Norton, I mean. Whar's a cup? Oh, here's one."

He dumped Ned's lunch into the bottom of the boat and washed away the clotted blood and saw that the wound was an ugly one to look at. He raised Norton and placed him in the stern-sheets, and taking the oars, rowed rapidly around the point half a mile away, and in ten minutes was in the harbor of Springport. Pulling rapidly across the harbor, he lauded at one of the wharves and hailed a man who was standing by a truck not far away.

"Hi, Jim Barley!" he cried. "Here's Ned Norton, with a charge of shot in his leg. Want you to take him to the doctor."

Barley, the truckman, ran down, and the two raised young Norton in their arms, and seated him on the bottom of the truck.

The rough usage had started the blood again, but Lije gave the tourniquet another twist, and held it until they reached the doctor's office, and carried him in, where he was laid on a lounge.

Dr. Furbeck came bustling in. He was a man of forty five, a master of his profession, and a judge of men, and was one of the few who saw in Lije Taylor anything except a rough 'longshore lad.

"Aha, Lije, my boy!" he said, "what's the matter now?"

"Don't fool away no time on me, Doc," replied the lad, "but look at this yer leg. He's been shot."

Dr. Furbeck called for water, and washed the wounded leg. Then he examined the tourniquet, and raised his head quickly.

"Who put this on?" he demanded sharply.

"Waal, Doc, I s'pose it ain't done right," answered the boy, in an apologetic tone. "You see it was the best I could do, and—"

"Shut up, you young monkey!" roared the doctor. "It's nearly a miracle, but you got the knot in the right place, and saved his life. If

you hadn't done it, he'd have bled to death before you got him here."

No time was to be wasted. With a skill which few men possessed, the doctor stopped the flow of blood, took up the artery, extracted the shot, and bandaged the limb.

"And you can thank the brains of this Lije Taylor," declared Dr. Furbeck, as Ned lay back on the sofa, faint from the loss of blood; "for if he hadn't put on the tourniquet just as he did, you would never have got to the village alive. That boy— Where the devil is he?"

He ran to the door quickly, but Lije Taylor had disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

A PIECE OF ILL-LUCK—DIRK DARK AND LIJE QUARREL—FERRET THE DETECTIVE.

LIJE had slipped out when he heard the doctor announce that the wounded boy was all right and was making the best of his way back to his haunt on the bay. First he wanted to look after his boat which he had left floating, and second, he did not want to have any one thank him for what he had done.

The truth was, his conscience began to prick him a little.

He felt that if he had left Ned alone and had allowed him to idle away the time as he liked, the accident would not have happened and he wanted to get back home and think it over.

He crossed the bridge at a rapid pace, not even paying his usual attention to the insults of some of the village boys, which on another occasion he would have answered by a shower of abuse. Once out of the village he ran rapidly up the beach and was soon opposite the place where he had left his boat.

He was just in time to witness an accident which was a terrible one to him, the utter destruction of his rough craft.

The place where it was floating was just beyond the point and as he came in sight of it a small towing steamer rounded the point at full speed and as the deck-hands were busy, no one saw the scow until it was directly under the forefoot, and if any one had cared enough to signal the engineer, it would have been of no use. As it was, the tug struck the lightly built scow amidships and crashed over her, burying the boat under the prow and she filled and sunk. It is to be regretted that Lije had not been better brought up, but the language which he hurled at the tug men was simply frightful. Along shore, however, where they are used to such talk, it was thought nothing of, and the captain simply shouted back at the boy:

"Keep your blamed scow out of my track, then—you."

"That's the Active, cuss her," groaned Lije, to whom the loss of his boat was a terrible blow. "Active enough to knock the life out of the old Ploughboy, she was. Dang a man at the wheel that can't keep his eyes peeled better than that. Now how am I going to take care of my nets, when I ain't got a boat?"

Lije was down on his luck, so to speak. He depended on the Ploughboy for many things.

Rigged with a light mast and sail he had made adventurous runs along the coast for miles and picked up unconsidered trifles which, when sold, had helped to support himself and his grandmother in the winter season. Unless he could get something in the place of the boat things looked blue to him. One of the men on the Active, a good-natured young man of about twenty, spoke to the captain about it. "Old Pap" Edgeworthy was not a bad hearted man and listened to what Dick Alton said.

"I'm mighty sorry for the boy, now you speak of it," he declared. "He's a sassy young limb, sure enough, but then he supports his old grandmother and that's a durn sight more than a good many men would do. I'll try to think of a way to make it up, somehow."

"That's the way they ride over us poor men, Lije," said a hoarse voice at boy's elbow. "That tug belongs to Squire Norton, and anything he does is all right. I've told you afore now, ef you had any sense, you an' me could make a good thing."

Lije turned on the speaker with an angry exclamation.

He was a stoutly-built, dark-browed man, looking like a sailor, with a repulsive face and an ugly drop in his eyes which made a true man his enemy on sight.

There were queer stories told of Dirk Dark, and he was more than half-suspected of being a smuggler—for at the time of which we write there was money in smuggling along that shore, especially in liquors.

Lije could have told more about him than any one else, if he had chosen, for this was not the first time the man had tempted him, but he was not the boy to peach, even on a villain, and though he would not join the man, he would not "give him away."

"I've told you a hundred times, Dirk Dark, that I wouldn't have nothin' to say to you," declared the boy. "Now I'll tell you more, ef you ever come nigh me an' try to git me to jine you, danged ef I don't give you away. You hear my loud bazoo."

"You would, would you?" hissed Dark. "Now hear me. Ef I ever come to trouble, I'll know it's through you, and then look out for Dirk Dark. I've tried to be your friend—"

"I don't hanker arter no sich friends," replied Lije, in a tone of sturdy independence. "I may be down on my luck, an' poor an' ragged as a June scarecrow, but I won't never git so low that I'll need to be friends with you. All I ask you is to cl'ar out an' let me be."

"I orter take an' give you a toweling, you young lubber," hissed Dark. "Ef I hed you out in blue water an' nobody nigh, you wouldn't threaten me ag'in."

"You lay a hand on me an' I'll agree to bu'st you with the fust thing I kin lay hands on, you pirate!" cried Lije. "I don't advertise to be anything big, but I mor'n half think I could lick you, just as we stand. How do you like that kind of talk?"

Dark made a rush at the fearless boy, and jumping to one side, Lije thrust out his foot and Dark fell on his face upon the scattered stones, wounding his face badly.

Before he could get on his feet, Lije had secured a stake about four feet long, and stood on the defensive, evidently quite determined to use it. Dark staggered up, and seeing his preparations for battle, made no attempt to advance.

"We won't say anything more about it now, boy," he said, "but one of these days I'll call it to your memory, that's all."

He turned and strode away down the beach, muttering to himself, and Lije followed, for the man must pass his little home on his way, and he was determined to be on hand to defend it. But for prudential reasons, Dark passed the house without looking up and kept on up the beach.

It was not much of a home, but such as it was Lije loved it and took pride in it. It had once been used as a fishing but, and the boy had taken possession of it when everything else went, and had fitted it up quite neatly. There were only two rooms and a curtained recess, where the old lady slept. The little stove, two or three wooden chairs, a rough pine table, and a wash-bench were about all the furniture of the living-room.

In the other room were a few more pretentious articles of furniture which had been left when Captain Taylor, the father of Lije, was drowned off Point Peninsula.

Old Mrs. Taylor, a bright-faced, neat little woman about fifty years old, met the boy as he came in. Her mode of talking showed her to be a Quakeress.

"I saw thee talking to Dirk Dark, son," she said. "Remember, thee promised me not to say anything to him."

"You needn't be afraid I'll ever cotton to him, Granny," replied the boy. "Trouble will have to come mighty thick before I'll go to him for help."

"But thee was quarreling, boy."

"Suthin' like it, Granny," replied the boy, "but he didn't get none the best of me. The worst is, I've lost my boat."

"The land's sakes!" ejaculated Mrs. Taylor. "How did it happen?"

Lije told the story.

"Don't thee give up, sonny," she said. "You've been a good and a true boy to me all these years. I've heard them say thee was rough-spoken and said bad words, but I always tell them a boy that takes care of a poor old woman, when he might send her to the poor-house, and only have himself to take care of, can't be very bad. The Lord will send a way for thee to get a boat."

"Have to be spry about it," grumbled Lije. "Say; have we got anything for dinner?"

"I've cooked the shad thee brought in this morning and there's plenty of corn bread."

"Good enough; I'll take a bite and then we'll talk it over. Something has got to be done to make up for that boat, I tell you."

Lije was a growing boy and if the meal which his grandmother set before him was not of great variety there was plenty of it and that was the main thing with him. Mrs. Taylor had tea while Lije satisfied his thirst by copious draughts from a pitcher of cold water.

"I think sometimes I'll have to ship, Granny,"

he said, "and the only thing that's kept me from it is leaving you alone all summer. Captain Dave Fearing wants me, but these Chicago boats make long trips and I don't like—"

At this moment there came a rap at the door and Lije went and threw it open and there entered a small, wiry-looking man, with keen, inquisitive gray eyes, who looked the boy over in a peculiar manner.

"Make yourself at home," drawled Lije, in a belligerent manner, as the man quietly seated himself. "Dang it! any one would think you owned the house."

"Lije!" interposed Mrs. Taylor, warningly.

"I don't want no man to come into my place like he owned it. I'm ekal to pitching him out ef he does."

"I can't tell what's come over the boy," gasped Mrs. Taylor. "Take time to think, Elijah; don't be foolish."

"You needn't think I don't know you, Ferret," cried Lije. "You might fool some of 'em, but you can't fool Lije Taylor. Any one who has seen them eyes of yours an' don't know 'em ag'in, orter be hung. Now what do you want here?"

"I want to ask you a few questions," replied Mr. Ferret, "but before I do that, let's cover the eyes that might bring me into trouble."

He took from his pocket a pair of blue spectacles and put them on, and his appearance was instantly changed.

"Orter hev dun that in the fust place, an' maybe you'd have got away with me," chuckled Lije. "Now fer business; what do ye want?"

"Can't we talk without the old lady?"

"Lije ain't done anything wrong, has he?" inquired the old lady, in great fear, for she had heard of Ferret as a special detective of the Custom-house, who had made himself a terror to evil doers along that coast.

"I never done anything to be ashamed of, Granny," replied the boy, "but I reckon I'll hear what Mr. Ferret has to say. Come outside."

The two left the house and walked away to a big rock where there was room to sit down, and Lije perched himself upon it, clasping his knees, looking at the Custom-house detective with keen, inquiring eyes, and Ferret stared back at him.

"That's right," said Lije, quietly. "When you've got done looking me over, maybe you'll spit out what you've got to say."

"You are a queer boy," declared Ferret.

"An' you're a queer man, Mr. Ferret, but I like you. D'ye know why?"

"Perhaps you'll tell me," replied Ferret, laughing.

"Waal, it's about this. You paddle your own canoe, an' don't let anybody into it. That's the kind of a shell fish I am, and fur that reason I'll let you talk to me; but I tell you right here, that what you get out of me you can put in your eye."

"Now, Lije—"

"I've whooped—you hear me? Now, I ain't one of the gang you're arter, but you think I am, on the quiet. Isn't that the size of it?"

"As sure as my name is—"

The Custom-house detective stopped suddenly,

for he heard a slight noise behind a pile of drift-wood which Lije had piled up for winter use.

Whistling softly to himself, he began to walk about, and suddenly sprung behind the pile, where he came upon a boy who was lying upon his face, and caught him by the neck before he could run.

The elf swore at him horribly, but Mr. Ferret held him fast.

CHAPTER III.

CHUB DARK—LIJE GETS A BOAT—ABEL SNELL'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE boy, if judged by his size, would have been said to be about twelve years old, but in reality he was nearly sixteen. His features were round and fat, and there was a cunning look in his eyes as he writhed in the hands of the Custom-house detective.

"If I did the fair thing by this imp, I'd break his neck," declared the officer. "Who is he, Lije?"

"Chub Dark, son of a fisherman who lives up on Fish Creek. You've heard of him, maybe?" replied Lije, with a queer look.

Ferret looked at the boy keenly, but his face told nothing.

"What do you want here, you young whelp?" demanded the officer.

"I came down to see Lije and ask him to lend me an eel-spear. Got a right to come, if I want to—ain't I?"

"How long have you been hiding there?"

"Who says I was hiding?" replied Chub, defiantly. "I was waiting till you got done talking to Lije afore I come out. Father allers says I ain't to shove my oar in when gentlemen are talking. I've got licked for it, times enough."

"No use talking to Chub," averred Lije, interposing. "You kin take an eel-spear, if you'll bring it back."

"Hope to die ef I don't."

Ferret released the boy, who darted away to the house and soon passed them with an eel-spear on his shoulder.

"You'll have to start out fresh, I reckon," Lije said. "That young sneak wa'n't arter no spear, an' he heard every word we said. It ain't any two to one you ain't got me into trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"There's rough men along this shore, an' any one that gives 'em away don't stand much show. I don't scare easy, but I've got to keep my eyes open."

"I'm half-inclined to take a partner in my canoe," averred Mr. Ferret. "It would be a good business for you, and—"

"Not any on my plate," exclaimed Lije. "I wouldn't be any good in that kind of business."

"But you could give me a start, if you chose."

"I guess not."

"I've a good mind to arrest you."

"Why don't you do it? You'd make a heap out of it. As long as these fellows let me alone I won't bother them, but if they meddle with me I'll get even."

"Lije Taylor, you are fooling away the best chance a boy ever had," declared the detective. "Come; think it over."

"I won't, I won't, I won't! All I know came to me, so I can't give it away, and I won't, either. You might as well quit. And see here; it ain't fair to tempt a boy, because he's poor and got an old woman to take care of, to do a thing he'd be 'shamed of. I ain't an informer, I tell ye."

"I won't say any more now," said Mr. Ferret; "but when this party is run down I'll ask you again to join me, for I like your ways. Tell the old lady I was trying to find a stolen Government boat; any yarn will do; good-by."

He turned away and strode down the road toward the village and disappeared in a pine grove on the east bank of the stream, and Lije looked after him with a sigh.

"I've heerd tell he was a fighter," he muttered, "but darned ef he looks it. I think I could break him in two, easy. Hullo; who is that?"

A man came running rapidly down the beach toward the hut, and as he came nearer Lije recognized a young fellow who was much in the company of Dirk Dark, whose name was Abel Snell. He came up panting for breath, and addressed the boy in a husky whisper.

"See here, Lije," he gasped, "you can do me a kindness, if you like. There's a chance for me to make a stake and you can share. Who was that man you were talking to a while back?"

"Don't you know, Abel?" demanded the boy, with a cunning look.

"I think he was on the lay for a chance to run in a little contraband whisky. No, I won't try to deceive you, Lije; you are too sharp for that, and I'll own up like a man that I do a little business of that kind now and then. If there is a chance to lay in with this Canada duck, I want it, only you mustn't let Dirk know."

"Now I'll talk square with you, Abel, because you've allus treated me well," said Lije, who saw through the game at once. "I don't want you to get in no trouble through me, an' ef I don't stand in with you, it's 'cause I promised my father, afore he died, thet I'd never do no crooked work? Ef you've got any notion of a deal with that man, you drop it like a hot potater. D'ye know who thet was?"

"No; not for certain."

"Then listen, an' don't give me away. I see his game the minnit he spoke an' he's a blamed Custom-house sneak."

"The deuce!"

"Fact; Paul Ferret, the keenest man in the hull force. Do you want to git in with him now, Abel?"

"Excuse me; not any. But how did you drop to him, Lije?"

"Oh, he give himself away the fust lick, but he's barking up the wrong tree. I see that, an' I told him enough to send him away on the cold track thet you've bin all over lately. Whatever happens, I don't give no man away."

"That's what I told Dirk when he—but I forgot."

"Did Dirk Dark send you to find out?"

"I may as well own up, now I've give so much away. You see Chub lit on you two talking, and he's a born sneak, so he listened, and

the end of it is I was sent to try you. Lucky for you that you turned out square, for if you'd give us away you wouldn't live long to brag about it. The rest of the boys were in your favor, but Dirk swore you were a young spy and ought to be suppressed."

"That's because I got the best of him in a tussle to-day. Now you can tell Dark this: ef he let's me alone, I won't trouble myself about him, but ef he touches me or anything belonging to me, the wuss fer him; that's all."

"Where did Ferret go?"

"I ain't in the informin' biz," replied the boy, "an' it ain't no use for either side to come to me, because they'll find me the wust know-nothing in fourteen counties. Hullo! there comes the Active back."

"There's a man aboard her makes himself too numerous," muttered Abel, as he looked at the tug. "He's beat me out of a load twice by towing the revenue boats, and he'll do it once too often."

"You'd better let Pap Edgeworthy alone, you and your pards," declared Lije. "He's a square man, an' I like him, ef I did cuss him like a pirate when he run down my boat this morning. What's he coming into the bay for?"

"He's always sneaking around this way," replied Snell, with a dark look. "Towing a boat, he is; one he picked up last week and left down in Five-Mile Creek. A mighty good boat she is, too. I only wish I owned her."

Under the bluff, not far from the Taylor cabin, there was deep water enough for the tug to run in close, and when near the shore Captain Edgeworthy, a gallant old sailor, with a face bronzed by the sun and wind of many winters, sprung into the boat towing astern and made for the shore.

"Here you are, Lije," he said, laughing. "You were mad at me this morning, when I cut your boat down, wasn't you?"

"Bet your life, Cap! But now I've had time to think, I know you wouldn't have done it ef you'd seen her."

"How did you come to leave her out there?"

Lije explained.

"And so you took Ned Norton home all right, without having your fight out?"

"Oh, that'll keep, Cap. Both of us is too ready for a fight to miss a chance; and likely I'll get a sight when he's well again. But is there anything I can do for you, Cap?"

"No. I only came in to bring your boat."

"*Mine!* The high jinks! I only wish I *did* own such a boat as that. I'd rig her out with a spar and make things lively on this lake."

"Well, there she is. I ain't got any use for her, and the boys are sorry they sunk your scow, and so we made up our minds to make it up to you this way."

"By George!" cried Lije, and burst into tears, and for some moments could not speak for sobbing.

"I'm a big calf, I know, Cap," he managed to say at last; "but see here—I've got the old lady to take care of, and I couldn't see my way without a boat. What is she worth?"

"Not a cent, not a cent. If I give a thing I give it," replied Old Pap.

"But I won't take a gift."

"Two dollars, then. Pay when you come of age. How does that suit?"

"Thirty dollars is about the figure. I ain't got any money now, but I'll pay it if I live."

"Better give me your note," said the captain, laughing.

"I reckon I will. Make it out for me, captain; I don't know how."

To humor the boy, Captain Edgeworthy wrote a note in his bill-book, and read it to the boy, who was immensely pleased.

"I've got to put a mark or something on that paper, and then you can hold it over me. If I don't pay, you take the boat. That's for a year, ain't it? Bet your life I'll pay it."

So Lije made his mark and handed the book back to the captain, and took up the oars.

"I'll put you aboard, Cap," he said, briskly.

"Lord, ain't she a beauty!"

It was a capital boat, and had evidently been built for service. Even while rowing out to the tug the boy had planned numerous improvements. The men on the tug greeted him warmly, for Lije was quite a favorite along shore, in spite of his rough ways.

"Thankee, boys," he said. "I reckon I'll git back, for I've got business fixing this boat up. Ef any of you want to use her, you can take her an' welcome."

"Come down to the boat-house to-morrow and I'll look you up some spare canvas for your craft," said the captain. "I've got two or three old suits of the Flyaway knocking around there."

"I'll buy it," cried Lije, eagerly. "Might as well do the clean thing."

"Oh, go 'long. Can't a man make a boy a present of an old suit of sails? Bring me in a mess of bass this week to pay for them."

"O. K.," replied Lije. "I'll be sure to bring them."

Abel Snell stood apart while this was going on, with an ugly smile upon his face. He knew that Edgeworthy was in with the Custom-house men, and not appreciating a kind action, he could not understand why the captain should wish to give the boy a boat; and, taken with the visit of Ferret, it looked suspicious.

He said nothing about it when Lije came back, full of joy at the acquisition of the boat and laying brilliant plans for the future. He saw something in the dark face of Abel Snell that he did not like.

"You ain't up to any deviltry, are ye, Abel? I give ye fair warnin' I don't like the signals you hang out. What's wrong with you?"

"Oh, it ain't anything," declared Abel. "I'll own I wondered why Captain Ned wanted to give you a boat; he'd see me hung before he'd give me one."

"He didn't give me one."

"No, you bought it, and gave your note; Lije Taylor's note! Ha, ha, ha!"

Lije strode up to him angrily.

"I'd have you know my note's good, and you'll see I'll pay it before it comes time for you to be hung. Now skip out and let me alone; I want to work on my boat."

Abel went away, but after he had turned the

first bluff he stopped and shook his fist in the direction of Lije Taylor's home. The boy had a new enemy.

CHAPTER IV.

TRYING THE BOAT—BIG BASS-FISHING—LIJE IN A SCRAPE AND HOW HE GOT OUT OF IT.

LIJE worked like a beaver over his new boat all that afternoon, and most of the time his grandmother, who had but little work to do, brought her chair out in the shade of a great rock and watched him while he labored. He had been obliged to "yarn it" somewhat in regard to Ferret, because he did not want to worry her.

"You just wait until I get a sail in her, Granny," declared the boy, "and I'll take you out—"

"You won't git me on your pesky lake, Elijah," she replied. "I have got no appetite to ride on the water. Seems to me my boys was all venturesome, and all I could say they would be sailor-men, and they are all gone—Johnny and Charley and thy father Ned—all drowned, one here and one there, and left me with only a boy to take care of me. But a good boy, Elijah; don't forget I always say that."

As the afternoon wore on Lije pushed out his boat and pulled up the lake, and as he passed Fish Creek, a mile from his house, he passed close to the hut of Dirk Dark. It had nothing of the neatness of Lije Taylor's cabin. Everything was slovenly about it and half a dozen old nets were hanging on reels under the trees. A slatternly woman was washing clothes beneath a ragged-looking apple-tree and a group of men were smoking on the bank by the creek.

They were a bad lot. Not a man among them but had the reputation of being a smuggler at least, and some of them had been charged with even worse crimes, although they had so far managed to escape the clutches of the law. The moment Lije rounded the point there was a commotion among them, and maledictions were hurled at him from the bank.

"Spy," "informer," "Custom-house sneak," were among the mildest words which he heard. Lije rested on his oars and looked at them in mild surprise.

"A lot of wild hyenas let loose couldn't make half so much row," he cried. "Say; what's the matter with you fellers?"

"Matter enough, you black-hearted spy!" roared Dirk Dark. "I didn't think the son of Ned Taylor would sell himself for a boat."

"You lie!" shouted Lije, "and that black thief, Abe Snell, could tell you I bought his boat fair and square, an' give my note fur it."

"Yaas give your note; *your* note; Lije Taylor's note for a boat worth fifty dollars, if it's worth a cent. But I'll get even with you; I had something to remember before and I won't forget this."

"And remember what I told Abe to-day; as long as you let me alone you won't have

no trouble with me, but lay a finger on anything that's mine and it will be worse for you, that's all."

He dipped his oars into the water and rowed on to the place which he had selected as his fishing-ground. It was a gravelly bottom, where the bass loved to lie, and Lije had rigged his trolling lines well for the work. He had two short poles with lines carrying one hundred and twenty feet and a third line forty feet longer. The poles crossed each other just in front of the rower's seat and left him room to move his feet easily. The ends of the poles fitted into cleats in the side of the boat. Pulling hard to get under way he let out his side lines, with a revolving spoon and shining minnow and then tossed out his third spoon, holding the end of the line in his teeth. With the three lines out he pulled on with his even, measured stroke just fast enough to keep the spoons playing, and before he had taken a dozen strokes his teeth fairly rattled as a huge fish struck the bait.

Lije dropped his oars and began to haul in. He knew the weight of a fish by the strain upon a line, and was satisfied that he had a rattling big bass. He began to take in line hand-over-hand, dropping it in coils at his feet, but before he had taken in forty feet there was a rush in the water astern, and out of the shining surface flashed a green-sided Oswego bass—a perfect beauty. Bar the trout in mountain streams, and no more gamey fish swim than the black or Oswego bass. Shaking his obstinate head like a child in anger, until the spoon rattled, he hurled himself downward, but Lije was a master of the trolling line, and when the king fish was ready to make his rush the strain was on him again, and he came in with mouth agape, until, by a sudden jerk, Lije landed his prey and finished him by a blow from a stretcher.

"Five-pounder," cried the boy. "Wonder what the old Cap will say to him? Hurrah! There's another."

The right hand pole bent under the weight of a second fish, and Lije caught up the pole and passed it backward so as to bring the line close to his hand, and in five minutes another good-sized bass lay in the bottom of the boat.

"Wish I had a feller with me," declared the boy, in a discontented tone. "Them fools down to the creek think I've gone back on 'em, or I'd go down and get one of them, for the bass are just on a tear this afternoon. Hullo; here comes one of their boats now."

By this time he had got out his lines again, and was pulling on slowly, and was soon struggling with another fish. Before he got it in he saw the boat from Fish Creek coming up rapidly, and in it four of the men to whom he had been talking as he passed. They were in a clumsy scow, but in spite of her build, managed to get her through the water pretty fast.

"Mischief afoot!" growled Lije, as he got in his fish and began to take in his lines rapidly. "They means to drive me off."

The big scow came booming on, the men pulling like demons, and shouting madly. They had been drinking deeply, and were just in a condition to be guilty of any crime, and Lije saw that he must get out of their way, if possi-

ble. He had a light boat, to be sure, but one pair of sculls were of little use against four ten-foot oars, which fairly lifted the old tub at every stroke. But Lije set his teeth, and for some distance actually held his own.

"I wish I had a gun," he gasped, as he felt that he could not hold out against them. "Danged ef I wouldn't send some of them down to the sandstone. How'm I going to get out of this?"

There did not seem to be much chance, for the big scow was coming up rapidly.

He looked up and down the coast even as he rowed and there was not a boat in sight and no one was visible along shore.

He had almost made up his mind to head for the shore, and, leaving the boat, escape into the woods, when he saw that the other men were running along the beach, evidently for the purpose of cutting him off if he landed.

What they meant to do was hard to say, but the least he could expect was horrible maltreatment at their hands, even if he escaped with his life.

Lije was a boy who knew how to act quickly, and looking down suddenly, he saw something which gave him a ray of hope. If it succeeded there was some hope; if it failed he could be no worse off than he was now.

He began to lag a little and the big scow came up hand over hand, and it was plain that they intended to run his boat down and leave him to take care of himself in the water as best he could.

Scarcely twenty feet separated the boats when the boy suddenly dropped his oars and bounded to his feet, holding in both hands an irregular chunk of iron which he used as an anchor and which weighed easily twenty pounds.

As they saw this action the men backed water as hard as they could, but their efforts helped Lije, for the scow swung round so as to leave the side exposed and Lije hurled the heavy iron with all his force and it crashed completely through the bottom of the scow, knocking off two of the bottom boards and making an opening through which the water poured so rapidly that in spite of their efforts to stop it with coats and jackets, the boat filled rapidly and the men were left floundering in the water. Lije at once dropped into his seat and pulled out of reach, and then lay on his oars to watch the antics of the scoundrels in the water.

"How d'ye like it, you cussed land pirates?" he shouted. "That's what you git when you interfere with Lije Taylor when he's tending to his own business. Sorry I can't be with ye always, gents, but I see them skunks ashore are on the run arter another boat, and I guess I don't want to tarry."

"Halt!" gasped Abe, as he clung frantically to the side of the boat. "I can't swim."

"Some of your pards had better help you, then," was the quiet reply. "Ef you was white I'd never leave you, but as it is, I reckon I'd better be getting."

Abe hurled a horrible oath at him as he rowed away, and it turned out that all he wanted was to get near enough to Taylor's boat to capsize it, as he was in reality a splendid swimmer.

Lije pulled away rapidly, keeping pace with the runners on the shore, for he wanted to pass the point before they could get another boat. When they did get one out Lije was half a mile away, pulling at his ease, and the Active was just below him, coming up rapidly. The fellows had no desire to meet Old Pap Edgeworthy, and pulled into the creek again, and at once scattered, for they did not know what the captain might do. The four who were floundering in the water got ashore as best they could, and also took to the woods, with the exception of Dirk Dark, who went home.

"You've been in trouble, Lije," declared a sharp-looking young man who was leaning over the side of the tug as he came up.

"Darned ef you ain't turned up ag'in, Ferret!" cried Lije, in an angry tone. "These skunks will overdo it, some day, and I'll jine you. But you jest orter seen me put the anchor through their old scow!"

"We did see you," answered Edgeworthy, "and I'm afraid you've made bad enemies."

"Tough cusses, you bet," replied Lije; "but I'm tough, too, I reckon. I'll bet ten cents to a slap in the face that them smug-thieves, I mean—are sorry, about this time of day, they fooled 'round Lije Taylor's boat. Say, did you see me drive the bottom out of their old scow?"

"That we did. And now, Lije, what do you say? Will you join me?"

"See you everlastingly durned first, an' then I won't. Look-ee here; long as I kin keep even, an' give 'em as good as they send, I'll paddle my own boat; when I can't, I guess I'll sing out for help. Here, Cap; got a big bass for you."

He tossed the king fish on board, and the captain received it joyfully.

"That's worth a dollar to me, Lije," he averred, handing out a silver piece. "The finest bass I've seen this summer."

"Not a cent," replied Lije, tossing the money back. "I want to give yer that."

"I'm taking a leaf out of your book, Lije," answered Captain Edgeworthy. "I only take what I pay for."

Lije scratched his head. He wanted to give the captain a present, and here were his own weapons turned against him. There was no help for it, and, much against the grain, he was about to take the money when the captain said:

"Look here, Lije; if you will take that old suit of sails for the boat, I'll take the fish."

"Good enough," replied the boy, joyfully. "I'll be down to-morrow and take the sails."

"Head her up toward Fish Creek there!" said Captain Edgeworthy to the engineer. "Come back on your fishing ground, Lije. I'll go bail those fellows won't trouble you again."

One of the men gave him a line, and towing astern of the Active, Lije went back to the bass ground, and landed Mr. Ferret and Captain Edgeworthy on the bank in front of Dirk Dark's hut. The fellow was smoking under the trees, and gave them a savage look as they approached, for he knew that trouble was coming.

CHAPTER V.

DIRK DARK CORNERED—TURNING TRAITOR—THE DESERTED HOUSE.

"HERE, Dirk," cried Captain Edgeworthy. "I want you."

Dark approached slowly, puffing the smoke from his villainous tobacco in a thick cloud about his head as he came.

"Now let me do most of the talking, Dirk," exclaimed the captain, "and perhaps on the whole it will be just as well for you. What have you got against this boy?"

"Got against him? I judge I've got enough ag'in' the young pirate to hang him. Didn't he sling me down on the gravel and cut my face up this morning?"

"Why don't you tell what you wanted me to do, Dirk?" demanded Lije.

"Dunno what difference it makes to them what I wanted you to do," howled Dirk. "I said I'd get even, and if I don't, hang me, that's all."

"So you tried to drown him, eh?" inquired Captain Edgeworthy.

"Drown'd him! I'd like to know who came the nighest to drowning—him or me? I don't know as he's got any right to holler."

"Well, he don't, Dirk. I'm the man that's doing the 'hollering,' replied Edgeworthy. "I suppose you know I own this land you've squatted on?"

"I s'pose you do, but you don't grudge a man a cabin over his head and a kiver for his wife and children, I don't reckon."

"A man that knows Sol Edgeworthy wouldn't have to ask the question. You've squatted here fifteen year, but you won't be here in fifteen days; no, nor in fifteen hours, if you lay a finger on Lije again. You hear me."

"You wouldn't drive a man out—"

"I don't waste words. Let Lije alone and I won't trouble you; touch him, and out you go."

Dark was furious, but he knew that the captain meant exactly what he said, and that there was no chance for him if he was caught troubling the boy. Lije was overjoyed, for he wanted to live peaceably and not be troubled when he was engaged in his usual vocations.

"That's all I ask," he averred. "The feller thinks I give him away to you, Mr. Ferret; 'tain't no use dodging, now. Speak up like a man and say it ain't no sech thing."

"The boy hasn't said anything against you, if that's what he means," declared Mr. Ferret. "I suspected you, as you are doubtless aware, Dark, and thought he knew something about it, but he's as close-mouthed as a clam, blame him."

"I ain't been up to nothing," answered Dirk, indignantly. "It's mighty tough, I say, when a man like me can't make an honest livin' without being suspected."

"Oh, I didn't say you've been up to anything," replied Ferret. "I used to see you with a hard crowd, and that's the reason I thought you might be in it. I've given up the idea, now, but of one thing you may be certain—Lije didn't say a word against you."

Dark affected to believe all he heard, but it was a dismal failure.

"I want a promise from you, Dark," said Pap

Edgeworthy. "I know you'll do any mean trick, but there is one thing to your credit, you won't lie. Now then, will you agree to let Lije Taylor alone?"

"Ef he lets me alone and don't fool 'round me or talk lies about me," was the sullen answer.

"No danger of that. Do you promise?"

"Yes."

"Then you may stay, but you've got to promise for the rest of your gang, too."

"I ain't keeper of all the 'longshoremen, am I?"

"It don't make any difference. If any harm comes to him, it will be through this party, and I'll send you to Stat's prison as sure as my name is Sol Edgeworthy. Is that a promise, too?"

"I've got to promise, I s'pose, but I tell you I'd sooner lay my hand down on that there block and chop it off at the wrist. But the time may come when I won't be tied down by promises to you, Sol Edgeworthy."

"All right; when you get clear of my land you are not bound, of course, but while you stay here, I've got you fast. Well, let's go, Mr. Ferret."

"I thought maybe I could get Dirk to give me a lift, seeing he's clear of that old party he used to run with," said Ferret. "See here, Dirk, you can make some money if you like."

Dirk drew the Custom-house detective aside and whispered to him a moment, and Lije looked at him in utter contempt.

He knew that the man was a smuggler, but he did not dream that he was mean and cowardly enough to betray his own partners, and yet he saw him whispering in a confidential way with the sharp detective.

"Take care what you do, Dirk," he said. "Dang me if that wouldn't be enough to make me speak up, almost."

"Mind your own business, you young pup," replied Dirk. "Seems to me you are mighty afraid something will come out."

"Oh, heave ahead, if you want to," answered the boy. "I'll say this much, though; if Mr. Ferret believes a word you say, he's a bigger fool than I take him to be. See here, Ferret; do you want to go aboard the Active?"

"No; you can put the captain on board and I'll stay. I've got something to say to this man."

"All right; you detectives will use any kind of a tool, no matter how mean it is. Come along, Cap."

But Captain Edgeworthy was uneasy. In two hours it would be dark and he did not like to leave the detective, brave as he knew him to be, with a man like Dirk Dark. He did not know how much the fellow might have at stake or what danger Paul might fall into, and tried to persuade him to come away.

"Let me alone, Cap," he whispered. "I'm a man who has taken chances all through life and I suppose I shall take them until I turn my toes up. I think I'm on a hot scent and am going to follow it before it gets cold."

"You must not trust that man."

"I put more trust in a pair of excellent revolvers I carry in my hip pockets. The man is a

scoundrel—I am certain of that—but I'll take my chances."

Lije rowed the captain out to the Active and then returned to the fishing-grounds, which he crossed several times with good success. Then he turned the head of his boat homeward with about forty pounds of bass, which he put into a sort of well to keep them fresh. He was ill at ease and kept looking up and down the coast, but what he looked for did not come.

"Durned ef I like it. Dirk Dark was getting ready for a ten strike and it seems funny he'd give it away like that. An' to think a man like Ferret, a fellow with an eye like a hawk, and the keenest nose for smugglers of any man I ever see, would let Dirk get a snap on him."

"What's the matter, son?" asked the old lady.

"I reckon I'll go up to Thunder Bay and set a few night lines," replied the boy. "You see I've got to take a good many fish now, to pay fer my boat."

"Thee'll pay for it, Elijah; I wouldn't work too hard."

"It's going to be a good night and I can go up and set my lines and be back by eleven o'clock. You'd better go to bed, Granny, an' never mind me."

"I'm never much afraid about thee, son, because I think God will take care of a boy who is kind to an old woman like me; there, go along and do thy work; I'll sit in the moonlight awhile and then go to bed."

Lije put his lines into the boat and started down the lake at a rattling pace. He was a capital oarsman, and did fine work with the oars, and in less than an hour was in Thunder Bay—a splendid bass ground. His lines were all ready and another hour was occupied in setting them and when his work was done, only the white floats with a small flag fluttering above them, marked the spot when he was ready to take up the lines. As he set the last float in the darkness he heard a peculiar sound on the beach and listened intently.

The sound he heard was made by some one walking along the shore, perhaps five hundred yards away, slipping now and then in the gravel on the beach.

Lije could not see them, but he was certain that there were two men. Soon the steps ceased and the murmur of voices could be heard. The boy got out his oars cautiously and paddled a little closer to the shore, when he heard a sharp voice, which he knew as that of Ferret.

"It won't be healthy for you to lead me into any trap, Dark," he declared.

"If you think that, we'd better go back," answered Dark. "I don't say for sure I can trip them; I only suspicion them from what I've seen."

"Go ahead," commanded Ferret, "but be sure of one thing, and that is that I know how to deal with traitors."

"All right; shoot me for a traitor if I ain't playing fair."

"Where are you leading me?"

"Well, it's a spookish kind of a place, but I've got it into my head, somehow, that it's the place the smugglers meet in. Do you know the old Frobisher house back of Lelleck's Point?"

"Yes."

"That's the place."

"And a likely place it is, too. Hadn't we better get off the beach soon? This gravel gives us away."

"We'll be on a dirt-road soon and I know a short-cut through the woods. I'd have gone up by water, but that cussed boy sunk my boat. You ought to take sides with me ag'in' him, if I play fair by you."

"I tell you the boy has not betrayed you, Dark. I tried to work something out of him, but all he'd say was that he wouldn't give any man away. He is altogether too square to suit me. Go on; we are fooling away time here."

The men passed on up the lake and the sound of their feet died away along the gravelly shore. Half an hour later they left the beach and struck a narrow roadway which they followed for half a mile, Dirk Dark in the lead, but followed this only a short distance, for Dirk turned into a wood path and they were in utter darkness.

Perhaps Paul Ferret, dare-devil as he was, would not have trusted himself in this place with a reputed smuggler if he had not kept the man under his eye from the moment he had landed from the Active. He had made him a promise large enough to win over any poor man, for his heart was set on unearthing this gang, and he thought the temptation of \$500 would be too much for Dirk. But he stepped up close and walked with his left hand on the shoulder of the man in advance, while his revolver clicked with an ominous sound as he cocked it, and Dirk knew that treachery would be death to him. He moved on cautiously until the dark path became more open and they stood together in the moonlight looking at the ruined house of the dead-and-gone Frobishers—a strange and solitary place.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DETECTIVE TRAPPED—DOOMED TO DEATH— THE MAN IN THE BAG.

THERE was an awful stillness about the place which struck a strange chill into the blood of the detective.

He had been in deadly peril before now and had faced it bravely, but there was something in the ghostly silence which made him shudder.

There was a legend about the old Frobisher house which he well remembered, and which was one of the causes of its standing here untenanted, and rapidly falling to decay.

Forty years before a whole family had been murdered, and their bodies found in the deserted house. From that time, it was said, the spirits of the murdered Frobishers haunted the place, and no one could live there. The second growth timber had come up about it, the house was falling down, and no one in that neighborhood would have spent a night under the roof for any amount of money which might be offered him.

"I don't hear anything," whispered the detective. "This looks like a wild-goose chase, Dirk."

"I didn't promise you they'd be here, did I?"

I only thought they *might* be, and one thing I will say, they've used the old house afore now. Will you go through it?"

"You may safely bet on it. Go ahead and be careful; I am not quite satisfied with you yet, my friend."

"I reckon we'd better go back, if you suspect me."

"Oh no; we'll go back when I've looked through this ranch and not a moment before. Don't hang fire."

"You ain't going into the house?" demanded Dirk, in great trepidation.

"That's about the size of it. How am I going to know if your night-hawk friends have been using the old house, if I don't go in? Away you go, Dirk."

The 'longshoreman took the lead in great fear, and they crept silently across the opening toward the deserted house. The awful silence continued and they reached the building, and Ferret looked in at the shattered window. The entire room on this side was illumined by the moonlight, and it was plainly to be seen that it was empty. Ferret turned to speak to his companion, when he felt something thrown over his head, and found himself enveloped in the folds of a fishing-net which was hurled upon him from above, and before he could disentangle himself, half a dozen men sprung out of the window of the next room and hurled themselves upon him, and he was quickly bound hand and foot. The men were effectually disguised by a sort of sack which was drawn over the head to the waist, leaving apertures for the mouth, nose and eyes.

"Neatly trapped, Paul Ferret," averred a hoarse voice. "Now then, what have you got to say before we work you off?"

"I don't know as it is necessary to say anything, since I am trapped by my own foolishness. Go ahead, boys; you ought to know I don't weaken."

"I didn't think you would, Paul," replied the same man. "We wouldn't have cared so much if Dirk Dark hadn't turned traitor and guided you here. The Night Hawks never forgive a man who does that."

"Oh, play that on some one else, for I know that Dirk Dark knew what he was doing when he led me here. If you are going to kill me, do the trick at once."

"Gag him," was the stern order of the leader, "and we'll take a vote."

A gag was thrust into the mouth of the detective and the smugglers, for they were nothing less, went apart a little distance, and the man who acted as their leader addressed them in a low voice.

"We've got to decide, boys," he declared. "This man never lets up when he strikes a trail and we've either got to work him off or make him a prisoner in a secure place. If we do that, we must keep him under guard night and day, and that would make trouble."

"I'd say give him his gruel, now and here, but Old Pap Edgeworthy knows he left him with Dirk and it will go hard with him if the man don't come back."

"It will go hard with him anyhow. This fellow is not to be fooled and he don't take any

stock in my threat to punish Dirk. If he gets away we've got to get out of the country."

"That's so," assented one of the smugglers, "but we've never had to kill a man yet."

"Do you weaken at the thought of a little blood, Number Six?" demanded the leader. "If you do, the sooner you get out of this gang and go West the better. All you who are in favor of death hold up the right hand."

Four hands went up and Paul Ferret was doomed.

"Now that is settled, we've only got to make up our minds how it had better be done. I was always in favor of planting a man so deep that he couldn't come up again, and in my opinion the lake is the best grave. What do you say?"

There was not a dissenting voice now.

"Here, Number Two," said the leader. "Jump into the house and bring out one of those long sacks. That will be just the thing."

One of the men sprung into the deserted house and quickly reappeared with a long sack. They raised Ferret, bound as he was and slipped the sack over his head, making it fast at the feet. Then one of the men, who did not wish to torture him, cut a long slit in the sack over his face.

"Good enough," declared the leader. "Pick him up and bring him along, boys."

The detective was carried a short distance and placed in a boat and the men got out their oars and rowed silently down the creek to its mouth, nearly a mile away, when they ceased rowing and the captain rose in the stern and looked out upon the lake.

"Seems to me I see something like a boat out there," he muttered.

"It won't do to go out if there should be any one fishing," averred one of the men. "Some of these night parties do come down here, I tell you. That cussed doctor down to the port is always skulking around in his boat."

"I'd like to cut the old fool's throat, if it is him," growled the captain. "There is only one way; put this fellow ashore here on the bank and leave a man to guard him and then go out and see what it is."

Paul was lifted out of the boat and laid on the bank, and one of the men leaped out beside him.

"If he tries to squeal put a knife into him, Number Four," was the stern order of the captain. "He's got to go anyhow and if it wasn't that they net the creek so much I'd drop him in here. Oars in the boat; pull."

The boat shot out of the narrow entrance to the creek and headed toward the object which had excited their suspicions. It was nearly a mile away and the men pulled steadily down toward it. Ten minutes later they could see that what they had taken for a boat was only a floating log.

"Nicely fooled," growled the leader. "Back water, you Number Three; pull her 'round Two and Four. Curse the luck."

The men pulled back quickly and instead of entering the creek beached their boat on the sand and crossed over to the place where they had left the captive. As they did so they heard

distinctly the dip of oars not a great way from where they stood, and all stopped.

"There is a boat out after all, Cap," said the man designated as Number Three.

"So it seems. Keep silent, and let us see which way she is heading."

All stood silent and listened, and could soon make out that the boat was receding rapidly.

"Going back to port," declared the captain. "Come on, lads; don't fool away any more time."

They crossed the sand-bar rapidly and reached the place where they had left the detective and his guard. All at once the captain uttered a savage cry and all saw, extended on the earth, the man they had left on guard. He uttered a groan as the captain seized him roughly.

"Hang you, don't do that," he hissed. "I'm all broke up."

"I'll break you up worse if you don't tell me where that hound has gone," screamed the smuggler. "You— But you are hurt?"

"Hurt! I should say so. I never had such a welting since I was born. That darned Ferret is a little feller, but when he gets loose he is lightning on wheels. Ach; don't touch me anywhere."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Pounded; put in a bag and pounded with a club; that's what's the matter with me. You may as well hang up your fiddle, for Ferret is away and the Frobisher house won't be any place for you from this time out."

"How did he get away?"

"I'll tell you all about it," groaned the man. "You see I never liked Ferret any too well and maybe while I stood here watching I might have stepped on him two or three times a leetle hard. Finally, I stood looking out on the lake, when I got a rap on the head that laid me kicking, and the next I knew I was chewing Ferret's gag and was tied hand and foot. I couldn't see very well, but I made out something."

"What was that?"

"That young curse, Lije Taylor was with the detective."

"I thought so. Now the next time any one says to me that Lije Taylor isn't in with Paul Ferret, I'll take it on myself to knock his head off. I don't 'spose it's any use on earth following those two hounds; that was their boat we stood listening to like fools a little while ago."

"We can't catch them, then," declared Dirk Dark, "for that new boat of Lije Taylor's goes 'ke a streak. And look at that!"

As they gazed up the lake they saw a red white and blue light shoot up on the surface of the lake and disappear. Five minutes after it was answered by a whistle inside the harbor.

"That calls out the Active, curse her," snapped Dirk Dark, viciously. "We may as well heel it, and as for me, I ain't got no use for home while Paul Ferret is on top of the earth."

He turned his face toward the woods and whistled and soon after Chub came sneaking out.

"Git back home lively, Chub, and tell the old woman that the officers are after me and I've got to lay low and she won't see me fer many a day. But if there is something you've got to

say come to the clearing by the Frobisher house and whistle.

"All right," answered Chub. "See here, pawp; has Lije been up to anything to-night?"

"He's been up to enough so that it won't be healthy for him and me to meet in a dark night on a lonesome road. What do you mean?"

"'Cause I see him going down the lake just now in his boat and he had a feller with him. Out there on the lake he sent up a rocket and then the Active whistled and I reckon she's coming out."

"Away with you, Chub. We have something to do; and remember, don't dare to open your mouth about seeing us."

The boy answered by a contemptuous sniff, and bounded away into the dark woods.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW PAUL ESCAPED—A BIG BLOW—THE WRECK OF THE NORTHERN LIGHT.

How had Paul Ferret escaped from the hands of the enemies who were determined to have his life, when he had given up all for lost?

He lay upon the bank, inclosed by the bag, and the gag thrust into his mouth. If he had been ever so determined to make an effort, it was out of his power to do so. But that the keen-eyed smugglers were deceived by the floating log, he would long ago have been buried under the surging waves of the lake.

His guard sat close beside him, whistling softly to himself, and only hoping that Paul would make some effort to escape, which would give him an excuse for killing him. For this man had a reason for hating the Custom-house detective aside from the fact that he had penetrated their secret. A brother now lay in prison, who had been run down by the keen detective, and this man had sworn to take revenge upon Paul Ferret for it. He sat there glowering at his enemy, and waiting for him to make some movement. Perhaps the very intentness with which he watched acted against his watchfulness in another direction, for Paul heard a quick step, a heavy blow, and felt a hand laid upon the bag.

"That settles it," he thought. "Paul, my boy, you've run your own neck into a noose, and it serves you right."

As the thought passed through his mind he felt that the bag was loosened at the neck, and a cool breeze was blowing in his face. Directly after the cold blade of a knife passed in between his wrists, and his hands were free.

"Up with you," whispered a voice. "Durn it, Ferret, don't waste any time. Told you how it would be, I did, but you wouldn't take advice from a sand-snipe like me. Hurry up."

Paul saw that it was the boy he had sought so long to make his friend, Lije Taylor.

He glanced out on the lake and saw that the smugglers' boat was still pulling outward, and tearing the gag from his mouth he thrust it into that of the prostrate man. Then, with the help of Lije, he pushed him into the bag, and catching up a stick, belabored him with it soundly, while unearthly groans came from the bag. At last Lije, who did not fancy this work, caught

the bag by the bottom, and threw the man out on the sand.

"Now if you want to stay here, all right, Ferret," he hissed. "I'm going to git."

Paul had taken his revenge and the pair ran along the beach for nearly a quarter of a mile, where Lije had drawn up his boat on the sand. They jumped in, and taking the oars, rowed away softly until they had gained such a distance that they were satisfied the smugglers could not overtake them, when Paul ceased rowing and thrust out his hand to his young friend.

"Shake," he said, briefly. "You have saved my life."

"Hev I?" sneered Lije. "Now the next time you want'er foller Dirk Dark, take a fool's advice. He's p'izen, he is."

"I agree with you, Lije. Now see here; you've known all along he was in this business."

Lije became suddenly dumb.

"You ought to go in with me," persisted Ferret. "I want a boy like you, one who has got a head on his shoulders, who will stand by me through thick and thin. It will be the making of you."

"Don't want to be made over," growled Lije.

"I never thought you would stand in with a pack of thieves like this," declared the detective. "I like you, and it cuts me up to see such a boy throwing himself away."

"Who sez I stand in with 'em? You know darned well that's a lie, Ferret. Ef I stood in with 'em you'd be food fer pike now, an' you know it."

"I see it's no use to talk to you, Lije," laughed the detective. "Anyhow, I'm going to take this gang in to-night, whether you like it or not."

He thrust his hand under his coat and got out three small objects which he lighted one after another, and sent a red, white and blue ball flying into the air.

"What's that?" demanded Lije.

"You'll soon see. Pull away toward the Point."

The boy obeyed and soon they could hear the whistle of a steamer, and shortly after the Active came down upon them. Paul Ferret hailed and the boat rounded to under the side. The captain appeared at the rail with a lantern in his hand, and flashed its light upon the occupants of the boat.

"By George, old fellow," he cried, as he saw the detective, "I'm mighty glad to see you, for I was afraid you'd run against a snag."

"And so I did. If I had not the luck to have this brave lad for a friend, you would not have seen Paul Ferret again. How many men have you got?"

"Eight."

"That's enough, if they are all our boys."

"True blue, every one of them."

"Then head up for the Frobisher creek. Will you come along and see the fun, Lije?"

The boy shook his head. To tell the truth, the adventure would have suited him well, but he had already made enemies enough, and besides, he thought the expedition would be fruitless.

"It won't pay you, Ferret," he declared.

"Them cusses won't stay when they know you've got clear. You'll only have your trouble for your pains."

"Get out of the way, then; see you again tomorrow. Go ahead, Cap—full speed."

The Active shot away in the darkness, and the boy turned the bow of his boat toward home, which he reached half an hour later. As he pulled the boat up on the sand, he looked at the sky and shook his head.

"A snorter will come afore morning," he muttered. "Cap Edgeworthy had better get in before many hours."

He did not say much to the old lady, only called to let her know that he had come in, and then tumbled into his bunk and was sound asleep in ten minutes.

He could not have told how long he slept—probably five hours—when he was awakened by the trembling of the little cabin, and sat up in bed to listen.

The storm he had prognosticated had commenced.

He could hear a roaring sound, and the waves boomed up on the beach below the house with a startling noise; and he tumbled out of bed and threw on his oil-skins, which no longshoreman can do without, and ran out into the tempest.

The night was intensely dark, and it was "blowing great guns." He could only tell where the lake was by the roaring of the waves as they were hurled up on the shore, and breasting the wind as well as he could, he gained the Point.

"The Lord help anything outside to night," he gasped, as he lay flat upon the rocks and tried to peer out into the darkness. "A schooner couldn't live half an hour. I only hope they've all found harbor, but it's nigh time the grainers were in. I hope the Active is all right."

Still the sea roared, and he was wrapped in impenetrable darkness. The point where he lay was perhaps thirty feet high, but every wave which broke upon it threw a cloud of spray over the fearless lad.

Then he thought of his boat, and ran down to find it, and discovered that it had been thrown high and dry on the beach, and was now out of reach of the sea.

He picked up the oars and laid them in a safe place, and had just turned toward the lake, when there came a lurid flash of lightning, and in the midst of the blue light, two miles away, he caught sight of a disabled schooner.

A single glance which he obtained by the lightning's flash was enough to satisfy him that the vessel was doomed, for he took her in from water-line to truck.

Her foremast was down, and the men were engaged in cutting away all that held. The head-gear was carried away, leaving only the stump of the bowsprit. The mainmast had snapped short at the cap, and the broken spar, hanging over the side, was pounding the sides as the wind came, with blows like those of a battering-ram.

"The jig is up for them," cried Lije, clasping his hands. "They'll go on the Point, sure."

He ran into the house and caught up a big horn, which had been his father's property, and rushing out again, sounded it long and loud. Then, thrusting the horn through his belt, he

began to drag wood toward the shore until he had formed quite a pile, upon which he dashed a quantity of oil, and crouching in the shelter of the rocks, lighted a bunch of oiled waste, and applied it to the pile, and a bright flame instantly sprung up.

At this instant he was joined by half a dozen men of the neighborhood, carrying lanterns and ropes.

"What's up, Lije?" bawled one of the newcomers.

"Enough's up, I sh'u'd say. Schooner out thar will go ashore, sure as fate. Bring wood, blame you! an' pile it on."

The men set to work with a will, and soon a great pyramid of flame was shooting up toward the zenith, and one of the men turned toward the boy and was about to say that he must have been mistaken, when out of the darkness into the circle of light rushed the doomed schooner, and as they saw how she was disabled cries of sympathy broke from the lips of the men upon the shore.

The schooner was steering badly. With all her head-sails blown away and only under the peak of the mainsail, they could not steady her, and she yawed fearfully, and twice, as she broached to, was hurled on her beam-ends and the sea made a clean breach over her. The men at the wheel were taking fearful chances in order to weather the Point, but all saw they could not do it.

"It's no use," groaned the boy, as he saw how helpless the schooner was. "She's got to go ashore, and by thunder! it's Captain Dave Fearing and the Northern Light—the best man and the best schooner on the lake."

Captain Fearing was known far and near as a gallant young sailor, and his schooner was one of the smartest on the lake, but she was in sad plight now. All held their breaths as she came down upon the Point, and for a moment it seemed barely possible that they might scrape clear. The broken topmast had been cut away, and was no longer dragging them to leeward, and even as they gazed it could be seen that the men were trying to give her a little more of the mainsail. But, at the moment when there seemed some hope, the gale redoubled in violence, and the sail was blown clear from the bolt-ropes, parting with a snap which was heard above the roaring of the sea, and the schooner went rapidly to leeward, toward the fatal rocks where the rotting ribs of many a gallant craft lay in the sand and ooze. The Northern Light was doomed, and Lije uttered a cry of agony as she came dashing down on the rocks a hundred yards from shore.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN DEADLY PERIL—LIJE TAYLOR'S OFFER—THE SQUIRE'S PROMISE—A GALLANT DEED.

THERE is no sight more terrible and yet more awfully interesting than the wreck of a vessel in the sight of people on the shore. As the light of the great fire flashed up and illumined the lake, it showed the crew of the wrecked schooner clinging to the rigging and looking out with wild longing toward the shore they feared they could not reach.

The number of lookers-on were being added

to at each moment, for the alarm had spread to the village, and the people came pouring out to give what aid they could. Among others came Squire Norton, driving down in his pony carriage, with Ned beside him. The squire was a handsome old man, with gray hair and beard, and an air of command, gained by long habit. In looking at father and son, it was easy to see where the boy got the somewhat domineering spirit which had aroused the ire of Lije. The doctor drove up next and joined the anxious party on the bluff.

"It is Captain Fearing," cried the squire. "Here, he must be saved somehow. A hundred dollars apiece to the crew to take out a boat to them. Five hundred to a man who takes out a line."

"Can't be did, squire," declared an old sailor, scratching his frowsy head. "I don't think there's a man here but would do his best for Captin' Fearing; but Lord love your heart alive—a boat wouldn't never git off the shore!"

"The schooner won't live an hour," insisted the squire. "Where can we get a boat? By George, I'll go myself, for one; I used to know how to pull an oar."

"No, you don't, squire," replied the sailor. "Tain't that we *won't* go, but how ar' you going to take a boat through them breakers? Why, the best swimmer on this shore couldn't git out to them, an' that's the only way. Lije might do it, but—"

At this moment the schooner was lifted high in air and dashed again with tremendous force upon the rocks. The rending of her timbers could be distinctly heard above the roar of the breakers, and one of the men was shaken from his hold and thrown into the boiling sea under the forefoot. They saw him whirled aloft on the crest of a mighty wave, borne onward swiftly toward the rocks, upon which they stood, and in a moment more he was dashed with great force against the cliff, shattered out of the semblance of humanity, and as he sunk he was whirled out to sea by the terrific power of the undertow, which is terrible on these shores, and he was seen no more until, ten days later, his mangled body was picked up on the shore ten miles below.

"Are we going to stand here like blocks while these brave men perish?" cried Squire Norton. "Where is the Active? If Captain Edgeworthy were here, he'd think of something."

"I hate to shove in my oar before older men," Lije began to say, when he was cut short by a woman's shriek, and a pretty young woman, with her hair flying in the air, ran down among the crowd on the beach. All knew that it was Captain Fearing's wife, the girl he married less than six months before, pretty Carrie Dean.

"Keep her back, some on you," cried Lije, hoarsely. "I'm going to make a try for them men's lives; you hear me?"

"Lije, my boy," moaned his old grandmother, who had come down with the rest, "before thee does that, think of me."

"That's all right. Look here, squire, I'd never take a cent myself for trying to save Capt'in Dave Fearing, but this poor old woman's only got me. Ef I go to Davy Jones, will you take keer of her?"

"Yes, my brave boy, but what can you do? It is horrible that *men* should stand idle while a rough 'longshore boy teaches them their duty."

"But, Elijah—" faltered Mrs. Taylor.

"Tain't no use Granny. Ef father was here, he'd do jest what I'm going to do. Now where's that light line?"

The men understood him as they saw him throw off everything except a pair of drawers and stand naked to the waist upon the rocks. They knew he was a beautiful swimmer, and if any one on the shore could do the trick, Lije was the one.

He made the end of the line fast about his waist, and signing to the others to stand back and give him room, laid out the line in a coil so that it would run out easily, and taking a short run, hurled himself into the water, going out of sight under a boiling wave.

There was an awful silence among the crowd upon the shore, and even Carrie Fearing forgot the peril of her husband for a brief moment as the boy did not rise. But the sailors noted one thing plainly—the line was running out, and the boy must be making some progress under water toward the doomed schooner.

She was hard and fast now. When hurled upon the rocks the last time a jagged point had pierced her bottom and like that shipwrecked long ago upon Melita she "remained immovable" and although the waves beat upon her with awful violence and she could not stand it long, the five men left on board were safe for the moment from being shaken off as the first man had been.

Two minutes of dead silence and then the dark hair of the gallant boy appeared upon the crest of a wave and he began to make his way toward the schooner, breasting the waves with a power hardly to be looked for in one so young.

"Blame my cats if I don't do it!" hissed a black looking fellow, who was standing partly in the shadow, to a companion. "I was in hopes the young thief had gone to glory."

Another sailor, but of a different breed, heard what he said, and promptly knocked him down.

"You skunk of misery!" he yelled, dancing on the prostrate man. "What kind of a cuss do you call yourself, say? Oh, take him away before I kill him."

Two or three others interfered, and dragged the angry sailor away from the man who had been knocked down.

"You didn't hear the cuss," panted the enraged tar. "He said he hoped Lije Taylor would go to Davy Jones. Blast him, let me get away and climb him."

"You'd better dust out of this, Bill Epps," declared one of the others, as the man rose, "'acause, ef Lije *does* go under, ten to one the boys bounce you off the bluff head-first. Now you git."

The man, who was known as a companion of Dirk Dark, disappeared at once, and was seen no more that night. The interlude attracted little attention, for most of the people were watching the boy in his progress toward the schooner. They saw him, after breasting the waves for a few moments to get his breath, dive again and make his way for some distance

under the water, and when he came into view again within twenty yards of the schooner a tremendous cheer broke from the watchers.

"He'll do it," cried the doctor, wildly. "I told you, Squire Norton, he was the smartest boy in the country, when you wanted to make him answer for Ned's getting shot."

The men on the schooner raised a shout as they saw the boy nearing them, and soon he was under the bows, and grasping the broken chains, raised himself from the water and came tumbling in over the bows. Captain Fearing, a hardy-looking young sailor, ran up to him.

"Hold hard, Cap," he gasped. "I want a minnit to take breath and then I'll be ready for you. Hang on by your eyelids, for she may get another boost."

"No fear of that," replied the captain. "She's fast enough now, the Lord help her. If our boats hadn't been carried away I'd have got ashore; as it is. There: are you all right?"

"Right as a trivet. Now what I want to know is, have you got a good two-inch hawser; long enough to reach the bluff, double?"

"There it lies in the bow," replied Captain Fearing.

Lije carefully uncoiled the line from about his waist and made it fast to the capstan, and then ran to the coil of cable indicated. It was a good line, but in order to make assurance doubly sure the boy bent on another and finding the two ends, he passed them on each side of the stump of the foremast and made the line he had brought fast to the ends and then gave a signal to the men on shore to haul away. They began to pull steadily while Squire Norton stood over them, beating a sort of time with his open hand, for the danger now was that the doubled hawser would prove too heavy for the light line with which they were drawing it ashore.

"Steady, men, steady," commanded the old squire. "I want to save Dave Fearing and his men, but I don't value one life on that schooner higher than that young 'longshoreman's, Lije Taylor. Steady, steady, I say. The waves help it along some, but look out when you raise it out of the water."

The cable was slowly hauled ashore and wild cheers were heard on all sides as it was dragged up the face of the bluff and seized upon by a dozen eager hands.

The men ran back with it as far as it would go, and, to their delight, it reached a tree twenty feet from the bluff, and, drawing the hawser as taut as possible, they made it secure and then turned back to the shore, and all looked with delight at the double cable, about a foot apart, stretching from the bluff to the shore and at least ten feet above the water.

"And if I ever forget what Lije Taylor has done to-night," declared Squire Norton, solemnly, raising his right hand to heaven, "may I be deserted in the hour of my utmost need."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CREW ASHORE—LIJE IN DANGER—CAPTAIN FEARING TO THE RESCUE.

"Now, then," cried Lije, as he saw that the rope bridge was all right, "who goes first?"

"Go yourself," replied Captain Fearing. "You, who have done so much, have a right to save yourself first of all."

"An' ef I do, may I be— No, I won't swear now. Let that Bill Perry go; he's getting white around the gills. A weedy sort of lubber he is, anyhow, Cap; where did ye pick him up?"

"Never mind that. Here, Perry; go on the rope. Straddle the two and hitch yourself along. Be lively, now."

The young sailor obeyed, and began to work himself along the cable toward the shore. As he neared the center the ropes sagged until the waves which leaped up beneath reached his thighs, but he hung on with desperate energy, and, after five laborious minutes, they saw him lifted over the face of the bluff by the men on shore.

"Now another," cried Lije. "There ain't no time to fool away, for this yer schooner ain't going to grind here forever."

One by one the sailors passed over the rope, until only the captain and Lije remained.

"Now, Cap," he said, cheerfully, "you go next."

But Dave Fearing refused, and Lije began to grow angry.

"When I come out with this yer line, Dave, there was a little woman twisting her hands an' cryin', an' lookin' at you through her tears. Now I says: 'I'll go out with a line, an' ef I can save Dave Fearing, an' the square will take keer of the old lady, never mind what comes on me.' I promised that leetle wife of yours to see you through, an' I'm goin' to do it. You get along that bridge."

They could feel that the schooner was shaking now, and every time the sea struck her, the timbers rattled and creaked, and portions of her hull were seen to float away on the crest of the waves. No one knew this better than Lije, and he feared that one or the other of them would not have a chance to use the bridge.

"Don't make a cur of me, Lije," cried Captain Dave. "You do it, when you talk of my wife and ask me not to be the last to leave the deck."

"There's one thing I swear," replied Lije, bounding on the rail. "Ef you say you won't go on the bridge, overboard I go an' do my best to swim it, an' then you'll have to take the bridge. Don't fool away time, Dave; you know darned well there ain't much to spare."

"I wish you would go first, Lije," pleaded Fearing. "I'd never hold up my head again if you come to harm after I leave you."

"No danger; I c'u'd swim it, anyhow. Away yer go."

Captain Dave saw that he was wasting words, and at once went upon the rope and made all speed toward the shore. The hawser sagged heavily as he passed the center, showing that the schooner had settled as the bottom was knocked out of her. Lije watched his progress anxiously, for to tell the truth, he did not care to swim through that surf again. It was not so much the distance—he could make that easily enough—but there was no place on which to make a landing and he had seen one brave man perish in trying it. At last Captain Dave reached the bluff and sprung to the ground, and

was instantly in the arms of his wife, who had watched him breathlessly as he advanced.

He kissed her tenderly and then tore himself away.

"Don't hold me, Carrie," he cried. "I've left on the wreck of the Northern Light the bravest boy I ever knew, and if he should come to any harm because I left the schooner first, I never could forgive myself. The schooner was going fast when I left her."

He turned and ran back to the bluff, just in time to see the Northern Light disappear like snow in water, as Lije was about to take his place on the bridge.

The boy went out of sight in the foam above the breakers, and a universal cry of horror rose, and it became necessary to lay hands on Dave Fearing to prevent him from leaping from the bluff again. But a moment's consideration showed him that this would only be throwing away two lives.

"Let me go, mates!" he cried. "Here, you lubber, cast off that hawser and see if it's fast to the mainmast yet. The spar is adrift."

As he spoke, the curly head of 'Longshore Lije appeared above the foam, and he was seen clambering on the broken mast and settling himself comfortably near the center.

The men raised a cheer, and obeying the orders of Captain Dave, caught up the hawser and ran along the bluff to the west. The design of this was apparent. If they could draw the spar away from the dangerous rocks, there was a better chance for 'Longshore Lije to save his life.

He was in awful peril, and yet through it all he sat coolly in his place, looking about him with eagle eyes, and evidently determined to take advantage of every opportunity.

As the sea caught the spar and tossed it in toward the shore, he began to calculate the chances of leaving the spar and trusting to his powers as a swimmer to carry him to the low beach near his house, when he saw the hawser move to the west.

"They've got a man at the head now," he said to himself. "Captain Dave is doing it."

The men set out on a run, and the spar was drawn rapidly through the water, and this brought it nearly broadside to the sea, and made the position of Lije anything but stable. The long spar was lifted on the crest of a mighty wave and then hurled down into the trough of the sea, and the boy was for a moment completely submerged; but he only rose, shaking his curly head, and watched the actions of the men on shore with renewed interest.

The spar was getting ominously close to the bluff, and Lije knew well that if it commenced to strike there he had no hope; and he had almost made up his mind to fling himself into the water, and swim back toward the west and come in again, when one of those strange eddies sometimes formed off bluffs, against which the waves dash, caught the spar, and hurried it westward a distance of nearly one hundred feet.

"Hurrah for us!" shouted Lije at the top of his voice. "By jinks, I think they'll do it!"

The men on shore redoubled their efforts, and the spar was drawn past the most danger-

ous portion of the bluff, and Lije was more at ease.

The sea was as high as ever, the wind roared furiously, and the lightning flashed now and then, but no one thought of anything save the brave lad upon the spar.

Captain Dave threw a coil of inch line about his waist, and gave the end to a party of his men, who held it firm, and all watched. The brave boy, seated on the spar, was carried in on the crest of a mighty wave. His eyes were steadily fixed upon the shore, and it was plain that he only waited for an opportunity. All at once they felt a sudden slack upon the line, and knew that it had slipped off from the spar; and without a moment's hesitation, the lad hurled himself into the water and began to swim toward the shore.

All went well until his feet touched the sand, and he gathered himself and began to run; but when the sea swept back the undertow caught him, and he was swept back under water to a great distance from the shore.

It was only his superb power as a swimmer which enabled him to rise to the surface before his breath was quite gone, and for a few moments he merely sustained himself upon the surface, making no attempt to swim and allowing the waves to take him where they would; and of course he was swept in toward the shore, but hesitated to approach it, for he feared to again give himself up to the awful power of the undertow.

The men on the shore knew the danger, too, and felt certain that if the brave boy should be again driven out to sea, there was little hope that he would have strength to gain the beach again. Ned Norton was a brave fellow, but he was sobbing like a child at the awful peril of 'Longshore Lije and their apparent powerlessness to aid him.

"Oh husband—Dave—" sobbed Mrs. Fearing, "can you do nothing for that gallant boy?"

"Trust me, Carrie," replied the captain, throwing off her clinging arms almost impatiently. "I am going to save him if it costs my life. There he comes now; watch me, lads, and if I get him, haul away for your lives."

He ran back with the rope still about his body to a distance of thirty yards, and then, putting on all his speed, hurled himself into the water on the top of a receding wave, which swept him out to sea. The same wave carried Lije Taylor outward and the two were separated by perhaps thirty yards.

Swimming with all his power, Captain Fearing made every effort to reach the lad, for he could see by the expression of his face that his strength was failing and yet indomitable pluck was written upon every line of his countenance. The two met at last, and Lije gave a sigh of relief as he felt the sustaining arm of Captain Fearing about him.

"Steady, Lije," he said, "don't grab me, or we are both gone."

"Steady 'tis," gurgled Lije. "Tell me what to do, and I'm there every time."

"There's a rope around my waist. Get hold of it and loosen it."

"I ain't going to take it off your waist, understand," declared the boy.

"Obey orders, you!" replied the captain. "I don't want any back talk from you, but only work."

Lije loosened the rope and seeing what was wanted, slipped his hand into the loop inside and fastened a firm grip on the line.

"All right," he cried. "Signal them to haul away."

The captain raised his hand from the water and gave the signal. A thundering cheer came back from the shore, heard even above the roaring of the waves, and grasping the line firmly, fifty men ran back at full speed, and in two minutes the panting couple were dragged through the breakers. The under-tow struggled with them, but many helping hands were ready and they were caught up and dragged away from the hungry waves, saved from death, and amid the frantic joy of the entire crowd were carried into the Taylor cabin. But Lije Taylor shook himself free and rose.

"I'm all right," he declared in a firm although slightly weak voice. "Hurrah! The crew of the Northern Light are saved. Captain Dave, shake."

And the two brave fellows shook hands amid the plaudits of their friends.

CHAPTER X.

WRECKING—LIJE REFUSES THE REWARD—THE WORK OF A FIEND.

AS every one had been saved and the schooner had gone to pieces a large portion of the crowd went back to the village, leaving only the sailors and wreckers, who remained to save what they could from the sea, and foremost among these was Lije Taylor, who seemed to have forgotten his recent peril. Before he returned, Ned came and shook the young 'longshoreman by the hand.

"We are to be the best of friends from this hour, remember," he said. "I'm sorry for what I said to you the day I got shot."

"Oh, we squared that the same day," was the answer. "I was sassy myself, but you got my mad up, layin' there in your boat looking so cussed lazy. But I ain't got no time to fool away."

"Come down to my office to-morrow, Lije," said the squire, "and I shall have something to say to you."

"Blowed ef I do," muttered Lije. "I know your little game, but you can't play it on this citizen; not any for Lije Taylor, thank you."

The squire shook hands with him heartily and the old doctor nearly wrung the hand off in his cordial grasp, and Lije grew red in the face with pain.

"Don't do that ag'in, Doc, unless you want to lame a feller for life," he exclaimed. "What's the matter with all you fellers? Any one would think I'd been doing some great things."

"You must expect that those whose lives you have saved will thank you, Lije."

"I don't want it, an' I won't hev it," replied Lije, viciously. "All you fellers let me be."

And he ran off and busied himself in saving various articles which came on shore, and if the pile he secured was large, it was because

many articles of value were placed in it by the sailors, as they were brought on shore.

"Everything you can get hold of is yours, Lije," declared Captain Fearing. "You'll let me do that much for you, I know."

Lije could not well object to that, as the waifs and strays cast up by the waves were regarded as the 'longshoreman's property, and this was made doubly his by the assurance of the captain. He was anxious to replace at least the great pile of driftwood which he had heaped up for winter use, and which had been used in building the great fire which had lighted them in their work. The pile grew visibly, and to it was added a vast amount of cordage, pulley-blocks, tackle, and canvas, with the various odds and ends which came ashore from every wreck. Lije tried to prevent the sailors from putting so many things in his pile, but they persisted in spite of him, and assisted him in getting ashore many things which he could not possibly have secured without their aid, including the spar upon which he had floated when the schooner went down. They worked steadily, and when morning broke, and the sea began to run down, nearly everything which floated had been secured except that which had been carried far down the lake by the wind and waves.

"That's a good job," said Lije, drawing a long breath. "Of course you understand I am awful sorry for Captain Fearing; but if the schooner *must* go, I'm mighty glad we were on hand to save the men."

"We didn't any of us have the sand to do what you did, Lije," responded a grizzled old sailor. "Hullo; what ar' you looking at that boy fur, Lije?"

"It's that p'izen Chub Dark," replied Lije, scowling at the boy, who was skulking along shore and marking various articles which he had secured with a piece of red chalk.

"So 'tis," replied the sailor, "an' now I think of it, where was Dirk Dark and his mates? The blamed whelps are ginerally on hand and git the biggest share out of a wreck."

"He'd got other business to 'tend to, I reckon," replied Lije, as he strode up and grasped young Dark by the collar. "See here, you young skulk, I want to know where the Active is?"

"I ain't got no call to watch the Active," snarled the boy, struggling like a young wolf in the hands of his captor. "Take your hands off me or I'll put a knife in you, sure as you're born."

"No you won't, sonny," replied Lije. "Tell me where the Active is or I'll mop the beach with you."

"She's in Fish Creek basin, then, if you've got to know," screamed the boy. "Dang you, I'll live to git even, one of these days."

"That's all right. Is everybody safe aboard the Active?"

"Fur as I know."

"Then you kin go. An' you kin tell your father—"

"Dunno nothin' 'bout him," asserted the young villain.

"Oh, dry up; you tell him when you see him that Lije Taylor don't hold with no men that's ready to murder, an' he'd better keep cl'ar of

me. I won't spit out anything I knowed afore this night, but ef I git a chance at him arter this, he'd better look out fur war."

"Tell ye he skinned out last night an' we ain't seen him," the boy persisted. "Dunno what on airth we'll do this winter, I don't."

Lije released the boy and he went back to his work, picking up trifles which the others had not cared to save, and marking them with his red chalk."

"That's a bad egg, mates," declared Lije. "I'm rough—I allow that—but I ain't got the pesky meanness in me the Dark family has, now you hear me. Tough is no name for 'em."

"Why don't you kick him off the beach?" demanded one of the sailors, indignantly. "Why, I flattened out one of 'em last night when you was in the water, and he as good as said he hoped you wouldn't make the schooner. Blast such sharks—that's what I say."

"Oh, you can't say anything too hard against them, but let the little imp git all he kin. He's got as good a right to it as I have."

"Not a bit of it. Didn't Capt'in Fearing say you was to have everything you could find?"

"So he did, so he did. That was mighty kind in Capt'in Dave, because it gives me a better right to it, and I'm obleeged to him. I tell you, mates, I was mighty skeered about the Active, fur I knowed she went down the lake last night, an' I was afraid she might hev got caught outside. But the Old Pap isn't easy caught."

Nearly the entire day was spent in securing the property which had been brought ashore, and Lije did not go near Squire Norton's office, for he knew very well what was wanted of him. About four o'clock in the afternoon that gentleman drove up, tied his horse in the grove in front of the house and came in. Lije was looking admiringly at the great pile of articles, valuable to him, which had been brought ashore, but looked rather sheepish as the squire came into the inclosure, accompanied by Ned.

"You didn't come down to the office as you promised, Lije," he said.

"I've been awfully busy, square," replied the boy, "an' besides that, ef you'll think it over, you'll remember that I didn't *promise* to come."

"Well, let that pass. I think enough of what you have done to attend to the matter in person. You remember that I promised a large reward to any one who would get a line to the schooner."

"Got a durned bad memory," was the reply. "Yaas, mebbe you did promise them sailor men something like that, but you didn't promise nothing to *me*, 'cept to take keer of Granny ef I didn't make shore ag'in, and I'm all right."

"I included every one in my promise of a reward, Lije."

"Don't want no reward. I'd do that much for Capt'n Dave Fearing any day in the week. 'Sides, he made that square, 'cause ef he hadn't come after me I'd have gone to Davy Jones."

"You can't escape in that way, Lije," cried Ned. "What's the use of opposing my father when he's made up his mind to anything?"

"But see here; would either of you fellers accept a reward for taking a chance to save six lives?"

Ned hesitated, and the squire himself did not know exactly what to say.

"Thought that would stump you," declared Lije, in a delighted tone. "You can't play no reward on me."

"I have got \$500 here, which I am determined you shall take in one way or another, Lije," replied the squire, "and you ought to know me by this time. You must take the money."

"Can't do it," declared Lije. "It's ag'in' my principuls."

"I ought to give you the worst licking you ever had in your life!" shouted Ned, in an angry tone.

"Mebbe you might slip up on it," was the independent answer. "Now, I know you mean to do the fair thing, square, an' I'm just as much obleeged to you as ef I took the money. What I done for them men I took a chance on, an' not fur pay. I'm thankful it come out all right, but I wouldn't think anything of myself ef I took pay for it."

"You are a hard boy to handle," averred the squire, who, after all, could not help admiring the independent spirit of the lad. "I'd like to have given you this money, because you must find it difficult to make a living for yourself and grandmother. Isn't there something I can do for you which you can accept?"

"Not for this thing, squire."

"I'll get the best of that boy yet," muttered the squire, as he drove away. "It is not often you find a rough lad who has his independent spirit, Ned, and I don't want to break it. But I shall do something for him, all the same."

Lije went into the house, chuckling to think he had got the best of the squire in argument. The temptation had been a terrible one, for to him the money offered was an immense sum, which might lay the foundation of what would have been a fortune to him. His grandmother, who had listened to the conversation without taking part in it, laid her hand upon his head in a kindly way as he came in.

"It is what thy father would have done, Elijah," she said. "God will surely bless such a boy. Come to the table, child; thee must be hungry."

"As hungry as a wolf, Granny," he answered. "It's the hardest day's work I've ever done, and it will pay the best. I've got a pile out there that is worth a hundred dollars to me, and there's a cask of pork and another of salt horse*, that will be mighty handy this winter. I say—"

At this moment a man came in at the open door—a rude, ungainly-looking country fellow, with his jean pants tucked into his boots, and wearing a shocking bad hat, which he took off as he saw Mrs. Taylor.

"Sarvice to ye, ma'am," he said, ducking his head. "I'd like to know ef I can git a bite of supper from you for a York shilling. I ain't got much money."

* Salt beef.

"Sit by, and welcome," replied Mrs. Taylor. "We are never so poor but we have a meal for a wayfaring man that looks honest."

While she put on a plate and another cup and saucer for the new-comer, Lije looked at him attentively, and soon a grin began to spread over his face.

"Darn him!" he muttered, "ef he ain't at it ag'in! He'd fool any one else on earth but me, but I ketch on."

The man cast an odd look at the boy, and after Mrs. Taylor had said grace, ate heartily enough to show that there was no sham about his hunger, and Mrs. Taylor took delight in helping him.

When he had finished she offered him a blanket on the floor for the night, but he thanked her, saying that he must get on his way. He offered pay for his entertainment, but it was refused.

Lije followed him out of the house and looked after him with a queer smile, as he passed on down the road toward Fish Creek.

"More fun a-coming," he muttered. "He'll play it once too often—that's all I've got to say!"

The boy retired early, and slept soundly—how long he did not know, but he was awakened by a stifling sensation, and found that his room was filled with smoke. He darted to the door, but it was fast, and when at last he threw it open, he saw that great piles of timber and driftwood, already wrapt in flames, were piled up in the doorway, a wall of flame through which he could not pass. He was in a death-trap from which it seemed there was no escape!

CHAPTER XL

THE BURNING CABIN—NOT DEAD YET—BILL FARRON'S DEFIANCE.

It seemed fated to be a week of surprises to the good people of Springport.

As the flames of the burning cabin shot up in the clear air an alarm was spread and people came rushing from all directions to give what help they could, and yet it was twenty minutes before any of them could reach the place.

They found the cabin a sheet of flame from the ground up, and to their horror that it had been completely surrounded by dry wood, piled up in such a way before the door and windows that it was impossible for the inmates to escape. Whoever had been guilty of this horrible crime had taken every precaution against escape, and cries of dismay were heard on every side. The dry building was burning like tinder, and the heat was intense. At the alarm the fire brigade of Springport, with their buckets—for at this time every house was provided in this way—started for the fire, and half an hour from the time it started a double line of men were engaged in hurling water on the flames. It was slow work and the fire got ahead of them several times, and it was only

when strong hooks were attached to the log walls and they were pulled down a log at a time that there seemed any chance that they could get the best of the fire. It was a desperate battle, but at length the walls were leveled in such a way that the floor was exposed, cracked and smoldering in places and men dashed in to bring out the bodies of Lije and his grandmother, for they had no hope that they were alive. They were driven out once again by the smoke and flame but instantly dashed in again, and found the bed of old Mrs. Taylor empty.

"Send along the water," shouted Captain Fearing from the midst of the smoke. "We must have this floor up, for I believe they are in the cellar."

The lines were formed again and the floor deluged, and they could look about them, expecting to see the charred forms of the unfortunate victims lying in some corner, but they were not to be seen. Searching about, Captain Fearing at last lighted on the trap-door which led to the cellar hole and tore it open.

"Give me a lantern here," he cried. Selecting one from half a dozen tendered him, he leaped into the cellar and flashed his lantern about the narrow place. It was little more than a hole in the ground which had been dug out for the purpose of storage, and in one corner was a large cistern roughly covered with planking. Why this cistern had been put in a building so close to the lake the boy had never known, but it was whispered that the man who had erected this house was a smuggler and that the cistern had been built more for the purpose of a hiding-place for contraband articles than as a use to the household.

Captain Fearing looked carefully about the place, but could see nothing.

Where had the boy gone, if he had indeed escaped, and why, if this was the fact, had he thought proper to destroy his own household goods?

By this time two or three others were in the cellar, ready to join in the search, but they looked astonished as they saw that the place was empty.

Among those who had come down was a man named William Farron, who owned a farm near by, which he allowed to run to waste in a shiftless manner. Yet it was not done for lack of money, as the man always seemed to have plenty, though how he managed to obtain it no one seemed to fully understand. He sidled up to Fearing in a mysterious manner.

"Don't this seem kind o' strange to you, Dave?" he demanded.

"I can't explain it."

"Maybe you could if you knew as much as I do about this boy. I never wanted to split on the young rascal, but now he's played such a

trick on us, I don't care if I give him away. Lije Taylor is in with the smugglers."

"Aha! Is that it?"

"That's it, Dave, I reckon he had a lot of stuff stowed away here, and began to get skeery, because they do say that Paul Ferret is going to close in on the gang pretty soon, and I think Paul suspicioned him, for he was here in disguise the other day asking all kinds of questions of Lije."

"Did he get anything out of him?"

"Nary a word. The boy is too fly for that, and wouldn't blab worth a cent. But I'm thinking he made up his mind he'd better skip, and so he burned the house to cover his tracks."

"You don't think the poor old woman is in it, do you?" drawled Captain Fearing.

"Why, of course. How could he get the stuff into the house unless she knew about it? And if he wasn't in a good business how could a boy like him throw away five hundred dollars, as he did this afternoon, when the squire offered it to him?"

"It don't look likely, does it, Bill?"

"Of course it don't. I've seen some things I could tell you before now, and take them altogether I'll bet my head to a brass tack Lije Taylor set fire to the house and skipped."

"You'd lose, Bill Farron, just as sure as you live; but the man that bet a brass tack and won would be sold bad. Come up here, Granny," cried a familiar voice.

The cover was suddenly thrown off the cistern and Lije, muddy and wet, came crawling up the ladder. He did not say any more, but turned to help the old lady out of the dark place.

"Glad to see you all," he said, nodding to the party. "Help the old lady up the ladder, will you, Seth Slocum? By George! They say listeners never hear any good of themselves, and I reckon it's true. So you think I'm in with the smugglers and this poor old woman, that never done any one a wrong in all her life, is in the game with me? Help the old lady out there, you men. That's right; now you put out to Mr. Green's, and ask him to give you a bed for to-night, Granny."

"Thee won't quarrel with the men, Elijah?" she pleaded.

"Quarrel! I've got to have a *man* to quarrel with me, not a low-lived skunk that thinks he can lie about a fellow when he can't help himself. Never you mind about me; I'll take care of myself."

The old lady was helped out of the cellar and one of the farmers took her to his house near by.

"Don't go away, Bill," insisted Lije, catching Farron by the collar as he was going to sneak away. "I want you to stop and make a search, and see how much Canada whisky

I've got hid away in the cellar. No fooling now; you've got to stay and after that we'll go over to *your* place and make a search and see what we can find there."

The dark face of Bill Farron turned to a sickly white.

"I was only fooling, Lije," he gasped. "Of course I know you ain't in with the smugglers."

"I won't say as much for you," replied Lije. "In my way of thinking, I can clear myself a sight easier than you kin. When your gang try to burn a feller in his house, it's a little too much and I'll make it hotter for them than they did for me."

"You don't know what you are talking about," growled the man, angrily. "I'm not going to stay here and be insulted, and I'm going home."

"Don't let him go, boys," thundered Lije. "I've got a reason for it, an' he's got to prove what he said about me an' the old lady."

"If he attempts to leave before you say so, we'll give him a rousing new coat of tar and feathers," replied Fearing. "Stand by him, you two. Now then, Lije, how did this happen?"

Lije related how he had found his retreat cut off by the fire, and not having anything with which to break out of the house, he was at his wit's end, and dragging his grandmother out of bed, he retired to the cellar, where he remained until it became unbearably hot, and Mrs. Taylor was gasping for breath. He then thought of the cistern, and made the old lady go down the ladder first, there being about three feet of water in the receptacle, and here they had remained until the sound of voices warned them that somebody had come in. Lije ran up the ladder and heard the whole conversation between the farmer and Captain Fearing.

"An' now, Cap," he said, "what I want to know is, do you believe a word this cuss has been telling you?"

"No sir-ee. I don't know why he took the trouble to tell such a yarn, but he can't fool any one here."

"That's hearty. I ought to take an' give him the worst thrashing he ever experienced, right where he stands, an' ef I hadn't promised Granny I wouldn't quarrel, I'd give it to him right in the snoot. Hallo, greeny; where did *you* come from?"

This question was addressed to the man who had taken supper in the house and who had refused to stay.

"Waal, I thought I'd come back an' take the good old lady at her word," replied the man. "I'm darned sorry to see your cabin gone, young'un; 'pears as if I'd have to camp under the trees all night."

"Looks like it, stranger. Say; you was the

last man here before I turned in, an' maybe you know where this fire caught."

"Mebbe I do an' mebbe I don't," was the answer. "What's the racket here?"

"Oh 'tend to your own business, Mr. Tramper. Here, mates; go to work an' see if you can find any Canada whisky or tobacco in this cellar."

The men, aided by Captain Fearing, made a close search, but found nothing. The search was a mere form, just to please the boy.

"I didn't think you'd rake up anything," averred Lije, laughing. "Now we'll see what I kin do."

"Those that hide can find," growled Bill Farron.

"Is *that* so?" sneered Lije. "Come along, boys; I'm going to show you that people who live in glass houses ain't got no call to throw stones. Come on, too, greeny; maybe I can give you a job."

The party started across lots to Farron's farm, that individual loudly protesting against this invasion of his sacred rights.

The odd genius who had taken supper at the cabin followed, but in passing through a clump of timber mysteriously disappeared, and was seen no more. Lije led the way straight to Farron's barn.

"Now listen to me," exclaimed that individual; "I warn all here not to go nigh my property. I'll make it red-hot for you if you do."

"We've come here to search, and we are going to do it, Bill," replied Captain Fearing. "If you ain't guilty, what are you afraid of?"

Farron jumped into the house, and was out again in a moment with a double-barreled shotgun, and stationed himself in the door of the barn.

"Now, friends," he cried, "I don't want to quarrel with my neighbors, but what I say is this: I'm on my own ground and defending my property, and the first man who offers to go inside this door I shoot dead in his tracks. Who comes first?"

There was a pause on the part of the sailors, and the ominous clicking of the locks could be heard as Farron cocked his gun.

He was a desperate man, and brave as Captain Fearing was, he knew that he must tempt death if he attempted to advance.

There was a moment of silence, and then Farron uttered a shrill, defiant laugh.

CHAPTER XII.

PAUL FERRET TURNS UP—CHUB DARK AGAIN—
ESCAPE OF THE YOUNG SPY.

ALL present knew the absolute ferocity of

the man when he was enraged, and every look of his savage face showed that he was perfectly wild. Even Lije Taylor, who scarcely had the quality of fear in his nature, stopped with the rest.

"See here, Farron," cried Captain Dave, "you wouldn't use that gun against your neighbors?"

"I'd use it against my father if he tried to set foot on my ground with nothing to back him but his own sweet will. I'm not going to have my place searched to-night."

"We can go and get more help," declared Fearing.

"So you could, you blamed cowards," sneered Farron, "but that won't prevent me from dropping the first man who tries to cross this threshold. You hear what I say?"

"Let's make a rush on him," shouted Lije. "He went through my place and no questions asked, and now we are going through his or I'll know the reason. Fire if you dare, you dirty smuggler!"

Farron brought his gun to his shoulder and fixed his savage eyes on the boy as he prepared to make his rush.

Thus they stood, death in the eyes of the fisherman, stern determination in those of Lije, and the boy made a sudden spring forward and fell at the feet of Farron just as the gun was discharged, and several men were slightly wounded by the flying shot.

Lije sprung up rapidly, but not so quickly but Farron was able to recede two paces and get the boy outside the muzzle of his gun, which was within a foot of his head. Farron, with a murderous oath, pulled the trigger, when a lean brown hand threw up the barrel, and the charge flew harmlessly into the air, and at the same moment Paul Ferret, who had come up through the back door of the barn, grappled with the enraged man. There was a short struggle, a low click, and Farron was lying on the floor with handcuffs on his wrists.

"That settles you," drawled Ferret. "I've been after you many a day, Bill Farron, and I think I've got you now. Do you join hands with me Lije?"

"You bet. Long as they kept their dirty hands off my place—all right; but when they try to roast me in my house, and the poor old woman with me, I turn against them."

"You won't live to see old age if you split," screamed Farron. "I may go to prison, but I'll come out of it soon enough to have your life."

"Threatened men live long. Come this way, Mr. Ferret, an' I'll show you a trick you never was up to."

"Remember, I warned you!" hissed Farron, writhing in his bonds. "Don't you forget I'll keep my word."

The boy laughed contemptuously and led the way to the threshing-floor of the barn.

"You were right when you thought I'd got onto their little game, Mr. Ferret," he said. "I'd got it into my head it wasn't right to betray them and as long as they kept right down to smuggling, I wouldn't, either; but they passed over the line. See any thing suspicious about this barn floor, Mr. Ferret?"

The Custom-house detective looked carefully about him. On one side were the sleighs belonging to the farm and the stalls where the horses and cattle stood; on the other was a large bay containing about twenty tons of old hay. The bay was planked up to a height of perhaps five feet and the hay rose far above this. Ferret sounded the planking and the floor, but could find nothing suspicious.

"I don't see anything," he declared. "Come, Lije, don't fool away time for I've got work before me to-night."

Lije approached the bay, while Farron howled curses at him, and using his fingers, pulled out several large spikes which apparently kept the planks in their places. He went to the other end of the planks and repeated the operation and then, seizing the planks, pulled them aside, when it was apparent that they were thickly padded on the other side, so as to give no hollow sound when struck, and a great cavity under the bay was revealed, in which, snugly ensconced, lay a large number of barrels.

"By George, a big haul!" cried Ferret, eagerly. "What do you say now Farron?"

"I say Lije Taylor won't live two years; that's what I say."

"It's no use talking about taking this stuff out to-night, Cap," said Ferret, addressing Captain Dave. "The question is, can I get you to take Farron to the jail on a charge of smuggling and attempted murder, and tell Dick Marlow at the Custom-house to send me up all the men he has got, well armed."

The sailors took possession of the detected smuggler and marched him away and the detective, with Lije Taylor, remained in the barn.

"I s'pose you thought I didn't know you when you played greenhorn and took supper with us last night," said the boy. "I say, Ferret, this is the biggest haul you ever made in your life, but I'll put you on track of a bigger one yet."

"Remember you are in with me and get a share, Lije."

"I don't seem to keer for that. The black cusses tried to murder me, an' that set me ag'in' 'em. There's nigh a hundred barrels of whisky here, an' I s'pose the Government takes it."

"That isn't all. These fellows must be convicted and sent up."

"We've got Bill Farron foul, anyhow, for shooting at me. He meant to kill me, fast enough, an' ef he didn't it wasn't his fault. Hi! see that young skunk."

He suddenly darted from the barn and started on a run after a slight form which he had detected sneaking across a field. Ferret stepped to the door and watched the race which was soon over, for Lije was a splendid runner. The two closed, and as they did so there was a snarling cry and the flash of steel, and soon Lije came back, dragging after him young Dark, who had been spying as usual.

"This young hound is meaner than any man in the gang," he asserted. "I reckon we'd better send him to jine Farron in jail. He knows altogether too much for his good health."

"I think you'd better cut his throat then, for he is no use to us," declared Ferret.

"You can't skeer me," screamed the boy, trying to bite the detaining hand of Lije Taylor. "I ain't been up to anything; you let loose on me, Lije."

"Get that rope and tie him, Mr. Ferret," said Lije. "I tell you it's all up ef he gets clear, for he is a born sneak and heard every word we said."

Ferret brought the rope and the boy was bound hand and foot. As soon as this was accomplished he relapsed into sullen silence and lay on the floor without the least motion.

"If the young cub only knew what was good for him he'd give those fellows away and get clear himself," averred Ferret, loud enough for the boy to hear. His eyes glistened, but he did not say a word.

"Now listen to me, boy," continued the detective. "I suppose you know who I am?"

"Of course he does. You needn't ask him anything, for all you will get out of him will be black lies," exclaimed Lije.

"You shet up, Lije Taylor. Yes, I know you, Mr. Ferret, and I'll own I'm caught, but I ain't done nothin'."

"You are in with the smugglers."

"I ain't. You don't s'pose they'd let a little chap like me in? That's one of Lije Taylor's lies."

"But you know where they are?"

"No, I don't. They was down to Frobisher's house before the wreck; I only know that much."

"Where did they go from there?"

"They went somewhere up the lake. I'll tell you the truth, Mr. Ferret; I think they went up to land a cargo."

"You young whelp," cried Lije, "do you dare to tell us they'd try to cross the lake in such a gale as that?"

"Didn't the Northern Light try it—say? I don't say they didn't git caught, an' then ag'in they might have got in somewhere, I dunno."

"You say they went up the lake, hey?"

"Yes."

"And that's all you know?"

"Yes; now let me loose."

"Not yet, sonny. I've got to find out first how much of this is a lie. If it proves true, I'll give you the benefit of it. Now I want to know the names of all the men."

"I ain't going to tell you that, you know," cried the boy. "They'd kill me, sure. No, you've got to find that out yourself."

"Then what you've told us isn't of much use. I guess we'll have to keep you, and maybe I'll give you another chance by and by. Why, how is this, Lije? You are bleeding."

"Oh, the little thief had a knife and cut me in the arm. That's the kind of an angel he is."

"Let me look at it."

Lije stripped up his sleeve and showed an ugly cut in the left forearm which the detective bound up with strips torn from an old flour sack which he found in the barn. He had scarcely finished the work when the tramp of feet could be heard, and they were joined by eight men from the village, with an inspector of customs at the head.

"Oh, here you are, Dick," said the detective, eagerly. "Lije and I have made a big haul to-night, and want some one to guard it, as we've other business to attend to. In the first place, watch this young snake and don't let him fool you, and in the next, fight for that whisky under the hay to the last gasp. Every barrel is contraband. Four men will do—I want the rest."

"All right, Ferret," said the inspector, "pick your men."

Ferret selected the men he wanted, and one of them lent Lije a pistol, for he was unarmed, and the party marched away in the moonlight. The men left to guard the liquor sat down on the barn floor, with the exception of a single man, who kept guard at the door. The rest engaged in conversation, and two hours passed in this way. Three times in the first hour the inspector rose and looked at the young prisoner, and each time found him coiled up on the hay in the same position and apparently asleep. The second hour he satisfied himself by merely looking at the boy from time to time, and satisfying himself that he had not moved. An alarm from the man at the door called all the party to his side, but they only found the noise to come from a half-dozen wagons which had been sent up from the Custom-house to take away the liquor.

"That's all right," declared the inspector.

"We'll send the boy back with the first load, and have him locked up."

He turned his eyes toward the spot where the Chub had lain, and instantly sprung forward with a cry of rage. There lay the ropes as they had been gnawed off by the sharp teeth of the young imp, but he had managed to make his escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE FROBISHER HOUSE—LIJE TAYLOR'S CAPTURE—A FOUL MURDER.

LIJE led the way like one who knew where he was going and it was not long before Paul Ferret understood that they were going to the Frobisher house.

He cast a quick glance at his men, and saw that they were plain country fellows, not used to fighting, who would be apt to shrink at the idea of shedding blood.

"I wish I'd kept the sailors with me," he muttered, uneasily. "These are not the kind of men I want."

Lije was studying the men, too, and noted indecision in every movement.

"They'll run at the first shot," he thought. Then, speaking aloud, he said:

"Where did you leave the Active, Mr. Ferret?"

"In Fish Creek basin."

"Then you can't do better than send these men to find her an' tell the men to come to the Frobisher house as hard as they can dig. Oh, I don't take in any of that cussed boy's lies about the smugglers going up the lake. Ef he says *up*, that means *down*, and I'm going to Frobisher's."

"You seem to know all about these fellows," declared Ferret.

"So I do," replied the boy. "I've trailed 'em down, odd times, jist for the fun of the thing, an' they know I've done it and are hot to have me with 'em, don't you see, because they are afraid that I'll split. But ef they'd walked on another track than mine you might have talked till the univarsal airth turned blue and I'd never have given them away. Send these chaps after the Active's men, Paul."

"All of them?"

"Why not? When I go on such a trail as this I don't want any dead weights on my neck. Oh shet up; I've see'd you looking at 'em."

The men gladly departed, for they had no heart in the business.

"I suppose the next thing we'll hear will be that young Dark has got away," declared Ferret.

Lije stopped and looked at him.

"You don't s'pose they are fools enough for that, do you?"

"They are fools enough for anything. You know how Customs men are chosen, generally, and I wouldn't give a pinch of snuff for an army of them, unless they are sailors."

"All I've got to say is, if the boy gits away from them, an' you haven't made your will, you'd better make it. There's no marcy for us now, ef we git into the hands of Dirk Dark and his smuggling gang."

"You are not going to weaken, lad?"

"Weaken! I ain't got time, so we'll just toddle on an' do what we can."

They advanced at a quick-step, and came up to the Frobisher place by another path than the one on which Dirk Dark led Paul Ferret on the night when he was taken. Paul was surprised to note the care with which the boy pressed on. There was not the sound of a rustling leaf—no sticks broke under his tread, and he kept well in the shade of the trees, and came up to the house on the side where the trees cast a shadow almost to the building, and before stepping out into the light he paused and listened intently.

"I don't think they are here to-night, Paul," he whispered. "What do you say? Shall we go through the house?"

"Heave ahead, my hearty."

"Come on, then. An' ef they should be there, don't stop to toot your horn, but shoot as you never did in all your life before, for they won't hold their fire. Stand fast a minute till I take a look."

The boy ran forward silently, and peered into the open window. As on a former occasion, there was no sound from within, and Lije beckoned his companion to advance. A moment more and the two were in the room, and crossing the floor of the old parlor toward the dining-room. Lije led the way to a door in one corner, and opening it, showed that it led into the cellar of the building, and they went down the rickety stairs cautiously.

"Got a lantern?" whispered the lad, in the ear of his companion.

"Yes."

"Turn on the slide."

Ferret produced his lantern and opened it; but scarcely had he done so when he shut it off again, and grasping Lije, hurled him suddenly to the earth. Lije was about to protest, when several pistols cracked, and the bullets whistled over their heads, and rapped smartly against the walls of the cellar. Then there was dead silence in the place, and Lije got out his pistol and cocked it, and instantly rolled away several feet. A bullet plowed up the bottom of the cellar where he had lain, and at the flash Paul Ferret fired. They heard a hollow groan, and then silence again.

"He got his gruel, anyhow," thought Lije.

Then, crawling close to Ferret, he whispered in his ear, and the two began to creep backward guided only by the knowledge which Lije had of the place, and found a pile of barrels heaped up in one corner. Slipping in behind these, Paul set his lantern on the top of one, and holding his pistol ready for a shot, suddenly sprung the slide and revealed three men stealing toward the stairs, while a fourth lay prostrate on the earthen floor. The pistols cracked together, and one of the men fell, while the others continued to run toward the stairs.

"They must not get away, Lije," cried Paul Ferret, sternly. "Halt there, on your lives!"

The men continued to run, and Paul darted after them, firing as he came, and another man fell at the foot of the stairs, and the last came rolling back into the cellar, hit in the back of the head by a brick hurled by Lije.

"I ain't much on the shoot," he averred, "but I kin throw a brick right lively. Here, Paul, I'll show you the trick of this place, and then we'll hump out of this as quick as we can."

He ran to a corner of the cellar, and picking a stone out of the wall, showed a small iron handle in a cavity behind. Seizing this handle, he pulled hard, and a portion of the wall, which was in reality a door, swung out and revealed steps leading down between the outer and the inner wall.

"No use to go down now," declared Lije, as he swung the door back. "That's their sub-cellar, and it's just piled full of goods they've run over this year. Let's git."

The boy ran lightly up the stairs, and was followed by the detective as soon as he had reached the landing.

Lije had bounded through the window, but hardly had he done so when he heard yells of rage, and saw the masked smugglers, twelve in number, with young Dark leading them on, close upon him.

"Run for it!" he shouted to Paul Ferret, as the detective appeared at the window. "I'm caught!"

And with these words, he darted past the corner of the house hoping to slip through, but no chance was given, and he was quickly seized and thrown to the earth.

"No use kicking, young fellow," hissed a voice which he recognized as that of Dirk Dark. "You die hard, but it's got to come. Curse you! I'd like to kill you here, but we've got to be keerful."

Lije gave utterance to a long, shrill, peculiar whistle, which rung out with startling distinctness on the clear morning air.

"Gag the young villain! you Number Six!"

hissed Dark. "He'll have the Active's men on us before you know it. I say, Chub, didn't you say Ferret was here?"

"They went away together," replied the boy; "that's all I knows about it."

"Then he's in the house. Jump in there, boys, and down him."

Half a dozen of the smugglers sprung into the house, but they were too late. Paul Ferret, who was sharp enough to see that he would throw away his life to no purpose by endeavoring to rescue the lad, had leaped through an open window on the other side, and was off.

"We've lost the best part of the business," declared Dark, in a gloomy tone. "Curse the dirty hound; why didn't he have the sand the boy did, and tackle us? I say, Lije, my hearty, I s'pose you know you are booked through? You can't answer, of course, and so I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you. Fire won't burn you, it seems, but water will drown, and I'm going to try how that will work."

Lije could not speak, but he glared defiance at his enemy just the same, and made an attempt to kick him, but Dark leaped out of reach.

"You are a game bird, Lije, my boy!" he cried, "and I hate awfully to put out your light; but it must be done. I'll own it's tough, but you betrayed Bill Farron and brought Paul Ferret here to show him the secret of this house, and there is only one thing to do. Bring him along, boys."

The band placed their prisoner in the center, and crossing the creek on a foot-bridge just above the house, struck through the woods in a diagonal line toward a creek perhaps two miles away. Lije made the trail as plain as possible by jamming his heels into the soft earth, and retarded the progress of the party as much as he could by slow walking, but at last one of them drew a knife and pricked him every time he hesitated.

"You get along there, you young imp!" he said. "We'll make you pay dear for Bill Farron."

"I ought to have cut Chub Dark's throat this morning," replied Lije, "and then this wouldn't have happened. Oh, you can't scare me, you fellers. There is only one death for a chap, and when it's over that settles it, the way I look at it."

The long tramp was soon over, and they reached the creek. Here lay a small schooner, with her topmasts housed so as not to show from the lake, and the party at once jumped on board, and the prisoner was taken to the cabin and locked in.

"No use to talk of landing the cargo now," growled Dark. "Let's get out of this and slip

up to the other station. I don't think Ferret has got on that yet."

"You were so crazy after this boy that you seemed to forget Ferret," said one of the men.

"So I did; but don't you see this young dog has caused all our troubles?"

"I ain't so sure. While you stuck to straight smuggling, Lije Taylor would never have opened his clam; I heard him say so."

"Didn't he get Ferret off?"

"Waal, yes; he got Ferret off, but that was only a chance, and after that he wouldn't say a word. See here, what are you going to do with the boy?"

"I'm going to run him out ten miles from land, and drop him over the rails with a twenty-pound weight at his heels."

"I'll be shot if you do, Dirk Dark. I like Lije Taylor, and before you do that you've got to wipe me out, that's all."

"Have you forgotten your oath?"

"Oath or no oath, here's a man that won't stand by and see murder done, and don't you forget it."

Dirk Dark made a sudden spring, a knife flashed, and the brave man fell dead at his feet, the steel buried in his breast.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUT ON THE LAKE—A VILLAINOUS CONFERENCE—BURIAL OF MART.

THE terrible deed of Dirk Dark for a moment staggered his mates, for the man who had been slain was a favorite among them, who had taken to smuggling more from the love of excitement than anything else, and now he lay dead, killed by Dark in a moment of passion. Even Dirk would have called back the blow after it was dealt if he could, and stood looking at the body for a moment with a gloomy brow.

"It's cursed hard, Dirk," said one of the men, slowly. "What did you stab Mart for?"

The question again roused the ire of the 'longshoreman.

"Perhaps some of you others want to turn traitor," he demanded, savagely.

"Don't threaten me, Dirk Dark," replied the man who had spoken last. "I'll see you through this, and after that I've got through with you, mind that."

"You are a white-livered coward, that's all you are, Ned Sinclair."

"Am I? That may be, but I'm no murderer. If we had a square up-and-up fight with the Custom-house sharks, I'd stand up as long as any man, and you know it, but I don't like murder in cold blood, and that one of our best men."

There were mutterings of discontent among

the others, and weapons were half-drawn, and Dark saw how easy it was to go too far.

"Let's get out of this, anyhow," he said, more mildly. "I'll own up I was hasty in stabbing Mart, but he drove me wild with his talk about not finishing up this accursed boy. I stand to that, and I'll fight any or all of you if you try to save him."

"Who the deuce wants to save him?" demanded the spokesman. "Mart was wrong about that, fast enough, for there is no safety for us while this boy lives. No; I'm as ready as you are to wipe him out, and I think the rest of the boys agree. Hands up, all who think this boy ought to take a bath."

Every hand was raised except three, and these men turned gloomily away as they saw themselves outvoted.

"Let's get the schooner out of the creek, then, and the quicker we do it the better. Take Mart along and we'll give him a grave which will be to his liking, for I think if he had his choice he'd say drop him overboard in blue water."

The schooner had a number of long poles on deck, such as are now used on canal boats, and the party set to work and in a few moments had poled the light craft out of the creek and into the deeper water outside. There was a light land breeze, which drifted the schooner slowly from the land, and they were in too much of a hurry to wait to get up the topmasts, and, besides, they could get out more safely without the upper sails. It was quite dark—that hour in the morning when it seems as if the darkness can be felt, and the men raised the main and foresail and the schooner crept silently off the land.

"It drives me wild when I think of it," muttered Dark. "Here I've lived a dog's life in a dirty cabin for two years, when we had stuff enough stored to make us all rich, and now to lose it in one night. Of course the whisky at Bill Farron's is gone, and it's ten to one Lije showed Paul Ferret how to get into the sub-cellar before they came out of Frobisher's. All we've got left is at the other station, and this cargo."

"I own it's tough," replied one of the men, "and I don't stand in the way of fixing that young hound for a minute, but at the same time I wish we had never quarreled with him."

"So do I, now, but we won't cry for spilled milk. We'll clean him out of the way, and after that, take no rest until Paul Ferret is under the sod."

"That's the man we want," declared Abel Snell. "If we can only get at him before he tells where the goods are at Frobisher's, it will be worth a thousand dollars apiece to us. I always said we had too big a stock on hand."

"But we didn't dare to open it up while Paul Ferret was sneaking around, and he's been on this lay since early in the spring, curse him."

"Oh, I don't know as I blame you, but this thing hurts, I tell you. Hark!"

Both men stopped talking and listened intently.

"I thought I heard a sort of puffing sound like steam escaping. I hope the Active isn't out," ejaculated Abel.

They stood silent for more than five minutes, but heard nothing more.

"I reckon I was mistaken," averred Snell, "but for a minute I was that scared you could have knocked me down with a straw. I believe I've lost my nerve these last few days."

"Don't do that, old chap," said Dark as he leaned over the rail. "No matter what happens, Dirk Dark never lets his sand run out and I want the rest of the boys to be just the same. But when you spoke I fancied I heard something, too."

"We must have been mistaken."

"Why, of course we were. If it was a steamer she'd show her fires in such a night as this."

"That don't follow. Old Pap Edgeworthy sneaks around the lake without a light just to crawl up on us without being seen. Hush."

Both stopped talking again and listened as before.

"What I heard then sounded like something falling into a boat," whispered Abel. "You don't think they can be after us in row-boats, do you?"

"Hanged if I know. There isn't wind enough to stir the curl on a lady's cheek and what little we have got is going to leave us. Ten thousand curses on the luck, what would we do if the wind died away?"

"We could only lie here like blamed fools and let Pap Edgeworthy come out and take us. All I've got to say to him if he does come is, he needs to bring men enough or he'll have the liveliest pic-nic he ever heard of. One thing has got to be done though; we must get rid of Mart."

"You are right there. It wouldn't be healthy for you to have them board us and find the body."

"Which means that the hull gang would lay his death on me, of course."

"Why not? There isn't a man of us would own to hurting Mart Martin, the best fellow who ever trod a quarter-deck. I wish you didn't have such an infernal temper, old fellow."

"I've got it and it can't be helped. Go and get a bag to put the body in and we'll drop it over here."

Abel, who really liked Dirk Dark, went

away at his bidding and soon came back with a large bag similar to the one in which Paul Ferret had been imprisoned. In the bottom of this bag he placed iron which weighed nearly forty pounds and then the two raised the inanimate form of the murdered man and placed it in the bag. Two other men were called and after a little natural hesitation at touching a corpse, raised the body and dropped it over the rail. The water parted with a loud splash and that was the last ever seen of Mart Martin. A wild life had ended in a stormy manner and he was at rest forever under the waves.

"That's well done," said Dark, "and I, for one, breathe easier. Unless you fellows turn against me, I'll never have that to answer for. Now get all the sail we can on her and let her go through the water, for we have no time to waste."

"Hadn't we better finish with the boy while we are about it?" asked Abel.

"Not just now. Curse the luck, I am on thorns for fear the wind will leave us before we get to the other station and if the Active gets sight of us before we reach there it means a big fight—and we'll get the worst of it."

The men put all the sail they could on the schooner and she crept down the lake slowly, for Chub had lied when he said the other station was up the lake. The men kept strangely silent, for all seemed to have an indefinable fear hanging over them. The schooner made some way and the breeze seemed to freshen a little and as they rounded the first point and stood out to get an offing, Dirk turned to Abel.

"This is as good a place as any," he said. "Jump down into the cabin, old fellow, and bring the boy on deck."

Abel did not need a second bidding and sprung down the companionway, eager to be the one to first announce to Lije Taylor that his hour had come.

CHAPTER XV.

LIJE MAKES A FIGHT—STANDING AT BAY—
WHAT THE 'LONGSHORE BOY WON.

BUT a surprise awaited him.

He laid his hand upon the cabin door with the expectation of opening it at once, but the door seemed to stick; he threw his weight against it but the door stood firm, and he again hurled his body against it.

"What the deuce is the matter with this door, Dirk?" he cried, thrusting his head up the companionway. "Did you lock it when you put him in?"

"No, the door is jammed somehow. It's queer, too, for it opened easy enough when I put the young whelp in there."

The man again hurled his body against the door, and, as before, it resisted his efforts.

"It can't be he has got loose, Dirk?" demanded Abel. "If he has it is just like him to make the door fast."

"I'll soon see," roared Dirk Dark, as he caught up an ax from a rack near the foot of the mainmast. "Out of the way, Abel."

The fellow sprung aside, and swinging the ax aloft, Dirk Dark dashed it against the door with all his force. At the same moment a pistol cracked within and a ball, splintering the door, passed close to the head of the smuggler leader.

"Hit her again, Dirk," shouted the cheery voice of the boy from within, "and every time you strike the door I'll give you a shot."

Dirk sprung out of the gangway in considerable dread, for it was a narrow place in which to stand when a pistol-ball pierced the door.

"Whoopee!" cried Lije from within, "got you on the run, hey? Oh, you long-eared lubbers, I'll make it the liveliest fight you ever heard of."

"Get one of those poles," roared Dirk. "It isn't safe for a man to stand in the gangway, I tell you, but we can get the door down from here."

One of the long poles was now brought into play, and, in the hands of half a dozen men, came crashing against the door, which burst open, but at the same time a ball came whistling up the gangway and one of the smugglers got it through both cheeks and fell with a howl of pain.

"Let me see the man who dares set a foot in that gangway," cried the boy from below. "I've got seven loaded pistols here and I can hit a man at short range. Be brave, Dirk Dark; show the boys how to do it. Thank you for leaving the tools so handy."

It was a terrible moment for the smugglers, for they knew that a good many loaded pistols were in the cabin.

Determined resistance on the part of the boy—and he was more than likely to make it—and the noise which was made by the explosion of firearms, might draw the Active on them in a few moments, and they were well aware that she was in Fish Creek basin, scarcely three miles distant, for the schooner had been making but little way, so light was the wind.

Dick was nearly beside himself with rage. He cursed himself and all the rest for not cutting Lije Taylor's throat before they left shore, and began to think that the boy was fated to lead him to his doom. Had it not been that a valuable cargo was on board the schooner, he would have closed up the cabin hatch so that the boy could not get out, and scuttled her at once.

"There is only one way," he cried. "Axes here, and break down the cabin bulkheads."

The men understood the plan at once, and so did Lije when he heard the order and the sound of axes over his head. When the cover was torn away, they would make short work of him.

The pine splinters flew under the blows of the axes, and Lije fired three shots none of which took effect.

Then the boy fired no more and the work of destruction went on, and the men above poised their weapons and stood ready to fire the moment they could catch a glimpse of the boy. A moment more and they tore away nearly half of the top of the cabin and a hollow laugh came up from below as the men prepared to fire.

They rushed forward together and were about to discharge their weapons when a yell of rage from Dirk Dark restrained them.

The whole cabin was exposed, but the boy was nowhere in sight.

"He is hiding somewhere," shouted Abel, as he dashed down the companionway. "Follow me, men."

A shot which tore its way through the shoulder of the speaker showed that Lije Taylor was still on deck, but he was nowhere to be seen. The smugglers poured into the little cabin together, and as they did so, Dirk Dark noticed the door which led into the hold of the vessel, and it occurred to him at once where the boy had gone.

"He has got into the hold," he hissed. "No more firing, men, but make a rush at the door together."

They made their rush, but the door did not yield, for Lije had contrived to brace something against it in such a way that it held firm. Axes were brought into play, but the door was of oak, and resisted their efforts for some time, and what Lije was doing they could not tell; but, when at last the door came down before their united efforts, they saw before them a barricade of boxes and barrels, from behind which Lije opened so lively a fusillade upon them, that they were driven back to the shelter of the cabin, two of them badly wounded.

"The devil guards his own," screamed Dirk Dark. "Now what do you say, you fellows? Do you think I was wrong when I wanted to kill that young hound on sight?"

The smugglers made no reply, but there was little hope for mercy if the boy fell into their hands now.

"Up, to the deck, two or three of you and take off the main hatch and give us light, and then we'll have that young imp out if it takes half our men to do it."

Lije heard the order and did not like it. If

the hatch was opened they would be able to take him in the rear and then he had little hope. His only thought all through had been to die game and there was still a chance. As he heard the men on deck above he retreated silently, and forcing his way over the cargo nearly to the bow of the schooner, laid five pistols before him, loaded with ball, all the ammunition which he had left, and prepared to sell his life as dearly as possible.

He heard the grating of the hatch as it was thrown off and one of the men above lowered a lighted lantern which shed a flickering light through the dark hold. As they saw it the men in the cabin, with yells of vengeance rushed at the barricade and were surprised that the boy did not fire. Scrambling over the boxes and barrels they began to advance cautiously, and as they were huddled together in the middle of the hold Lije fired one shot, which told upon two members of the party and drew from them yells of pain.

"He's in the bow!" cried Dirk Dark. "Rush on him and the man who yields a step I'll kill."

In his rage he did not notice that the men on deck were making a terrible racket, and led the way through the hold, when Lije again opened fire. Another man was hit, but not seriously injured, and the boy sent down another shot with a like result. He had now two charges left and, grasping a pistol in each hand, lay silent, determined to make the last two shots pay for his own life, and to keep one for Dirk Dark.

"I've got you now," shouted the smuggler, as he pressed on. "It is your life or mine, Lije Taylor."

Lije braced himself for the last struggle, giving a last thought to his old grandmother, whom he loved so dearly in his rude way, when the light of half a dozen lanterns flashed upon the scene, and they were conscious that the hold was full of armed men, rushing upon them in the rear.

"Taken, by Satan!" shouted Dirk, as he hurled himself at the boy, knife in hand; "but I'll have your life first, Lije Taylor!"

A man who was a little in advance of the charging party raised his hand, there was the sharp crack of a pistol, and Dirk Dark spun round on his heels, brought his feet sharply together, and fell with a crash.

"Now then," cried the stern voice of Paul Ferret, "do you surrender, or must I give you death here and now?"

"I cave," said Abel, throwing down the pistol and knife which he held. "It's no use fighting against two such devils. You were bad enough alone, Paul Ferret, but when you've got Lije Taylor with you, there is no chance for us."

The men came out one by one and gave themselves up, and last of all came Lije, whom Paul Ferret caught in his arms and pressed to his bosom.

"All safe, Lije?" he asked, eagerly.

"Safe as a bug in a pillow. It takes more than a gang of smugglers to use me up."

A few words will explain how Paul Ferret came so opportunely to the aid of the boy. When he escaped from the Frobisher house he had run at his best speed until he met the crew of the Active and they had taken up the trail at once, sending back the engineer and a single man to get the tug out of the creek, with orders to steam slowly along the coast and wait for signals. They had followed the trail to the creek where the schooner had taken refuge and knew that she had got out, and a signal was sent up for the Active, and in half an hour they were on board. While cruising about the lake in the hope of seeing a light, they had heard the rattle of firearms and had come upon the schooner while Lije was having his fight with the smugglers in the hold. The men on deck were first disposed of and then they entered the hold, with the result we know.

Dirk Dark was brought out of the hold dead, for the last shot of Ferret had passed through his brain, and the Active went back to Springport with the schooner in tow.

The trial of the smugglers took place in a neighboring town and Lije was the principal witness. All were sent to prison for various terms, Farron for twenty years for assault with intent to commit murder. He said nothing when sentence was pronounced, but looked at Lije in a way which made the blood of the lookers-on run cold. Chub Dark was sent to a reformatory for boys. The trial lasted two weeks and then Lije went back to

Springport, and refusing the ovation which the citizens were inclined to give him, started for home.

"The old lady will be mighty glad to see me," he said to Paul Ferret, who was with him. "You said the boys had built up the house for her; that was kind."

As they passed the point of woods Lije paused and stared. In the place of the old cabin stood a neat dwelling, and on the veranda sat old Mrs. Taylor rocking in a big chair and knitting vigorously.

"Why, why, why"—stammered Lije.

"That's the house the boys built you, and you can't refuse to take it, for it was put up with your money," declared Paul.

"Mine!" gasped Lije.

"Yes, sir. Your share out of the goods captured at Farron's and the Frobisher house was \$1,500. Your grandmother has accepted a deed of ten acres of land on which the house is built; the house cost \$1,000, and you have \$500 to begin the winter with. So you and I together, now the future of the old lady is secured, will join hands in rooting out other smugglers along the lake shore. What do you say?"

The two shook hands, and then Lije ran and threw himself into his grandmother's arms, and Paul Ferret stood looking at them with humid eyes. In the after years the two had many adventures, but neither again had such a happy hour as this, when the gallant boy was sobbing for joy upon the bosom of the old lady to whom Lije had been such a stay. When he had made himself a name as one of the brightest detectives in the service of the Government, he used to talk with pride of the days when he fought the smugglers along the shores and on the waters of Ontario.

THE END.

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